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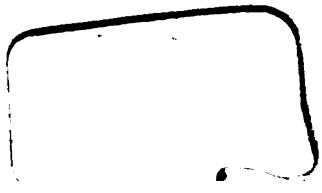

LIFE AND LETTERS OF GENERAL SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS

This Edition consists of
five hundred copies of which this is
No. 63

LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS

MAJOR GENERAL IN THE CONTINENTAL
ARMY AND CHIEF JUDGE OF THE
NORTHWESTERN TERRITORY
1787 — 1789

BY

CHARLES S. HALL

BINGHAMTON, N. Y.
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1905

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IN MEMORIAM

SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS

"Soldier, scholar, judge, one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned, who first suggested the Continental Congress, from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War."—*Senator Geo. F. Hoar.*

PREFACE

A considerable part of the correspondence of General Parsons during and before the Revolutionary War and while in the Northwestern Territory, together with valuable official papers, was lost by the burning of the building in Middletown in which they were stored. A grandson and namesake of the General, noted as an antiquarian, genealogist and historian, procured duplicates of the lost papers, so far as he was able, intending to publish a biography of the General; but ill-health unfortunately forced him to abandon the undertaking for which he was unusually well equipped. The papers preserved by him, and the remnants of the General's letters—many of them having fallen into the hands of collectors—were inherited by a great-grandson of the General, Samuel H. Parsons of New York, who still has them in his possession. Among them are the General's Letter Book and the Order Book of his Adjutant, David Humphreys. Having access to this collection through the courtesy of Mr. Parsons, and to the Washington Papers by favor of the librarian of the State Department, and having for another purpose already collected much valuable material relating to the General's life and public services, the writer was led to take up the work laid down by the General's grandson. This volume is the outcome of the undertaking. The letters and documents of which this work is largely made up are most of them given in full, and, having been arranged chronologically, furnish, with the intermediate text, a complete and continuous story of the General's life.

Among these papers are: Parsons' letter to Samuel Adams in 1773, first suggesting a Continental Congress; the account of his setting on foot the expedition against Ticonderoga, which "gave to Connecticut the honor of compelling the first surrender of the British flag to the coming republic"; his

spirited correspondence with Governor Tryon in 1777, which Tryon deemed important enough to send to Lord George Germain; his remarkable and almost prophetic letter of December, 1778, to his classmate, the Rev. Dr. William Walter, then a refugee in New York; his letter of August, 1779, to Colonel Root in Congress, discussing the effect on the country of the depreciation of the currency; the account of his observations and discoveries in the West while there to treat with the Shawanese Indians; his memorial to Congress in 1787 for the sale of lands on the Ohio to the Ohio Company, thereby enabling Revolutionary soldiers to exchange their almost worthless pay-certificates for homes in the West; the Thanksgiving Sermon which, in the absence of a clergyman, he preached at Marietta in December, 1788, being the first thanksgiving sermon preached in the Northwestern Territory; and several letters giving particulars, hitherto unknown, of the General's sad death and of his burial on the banks of the Ohio.

It is much to be regretted that, although careful search has been made for a portrait of the General, none can be found. If any ever existed it probably has been destroyed.

To Mr. Parsons, to the librarians of the State Department at Washington, of the State library at Albany, of the Astor and Lenox libraries in New York, of the Boston and the other libraries where I have had occasion to search, and to my many correspondents, I avail myself of this opportunity to make due acknowledgments for valuable assistance ever courteously rendered.

C. S. H.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

1775—1783

The days after Lexington and Concord. The organization and officers of the Connecticut Line 1

CHAPTER II

The Parsons lineage and family connections 8

CHAPTER III

Parsons graduates at Harvard and studies law. The French and Indian war and the events between 1762 and 1775 13

CHAPTER IV

1762—1775

Parsons a member of the Connecticut General Assembly and of the Committee of Correspondence. Is the first to suggest a Congress of all the Colonies. Capture of Ticonderoga 18

CHAPTER V

April, 1775—March, 1776

Siege of Boston. Reorganization of the Army. March to New York . 28

CHAPTER VI

April—September, 1776

The army in New York. The Hickey plot. Arrival of General Howe. Parsons promoted brigadier general. Sent to reinforce the Brooklyn lines. The British prepare to attack 39

CHAPTER VII

August, 1776

The battle of Long Island. Retreat to New York 50

CHAPTER VIII

September, 1776

Bushnell's torpedo. Kip's Bay affair. Retreat from New York. Battle of Harlem Heights 59

CHAPTER IX

September, 1776—February, 1777

Battle of White Plains. Parsons holds extreme left of line at Rye Pond. Marches to attack General Agnew. In the Highlands and New Jersey. Expedition with Clinton. Returns to Peekskill. Battles of Trenton and Princeton. Commands the left in Heath's attack on New York 71

CHAPTER X

January—June, 1777

Recruiting the Connecticut Line. Inoculation of the troops. Tryon's raid on Danbury. Death of Wooster. Correspondence with Washington. Meigs' expedition to Sag Harbor 85

CHAPTER XI

December, 1787—December, 1788

Campaign of 1777. Parsons reinforces Washington in New Jersey. Letter to his wife. Burgoyne's movement. Parsons ordered to the defense of the Highlands. His expedition to Setauket. Brandywine and Germantown. Surrender of Burgoyne 101

CHAPTER XII

September—December, 1777

Parsons at White Plains. Putnam plans to attack New York, Clinton reinforced, attempts to relieve Burgoyne. Captures the Posts on the Hudson. Parsons forwards reinforcements from Connecticut. James DeLancey a prisoner. Tryon burns Phillips Manor. The Parsons-Tryon correspondence 113

CHAPTER XIII

October, 1777—April, 1778

Parsons' expedition to Long Island. In command at West Point. Correspondence with Governor Clinton. Letter to Sir Henry Clinton . 133

CHAPTER XIV

January—March, 1778

At West Point. Difficulties encountered in constructing the Works. Correspondence with Washington. Social life. Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan." 151

CHAPTER XV

March—August, 1778

At West Point. Correspondence with Generals McDougall and Gates. Arrest of Oliver DeLancey. Letter to Dr. William Walter. Parsons joins Washington's Army at White Plains 166

CHAPTER XVI

June, 1778—March, 1779

Treaty with France. Evacuation of Philadelphia. Army at White Plains. Arrival of D'Estaing. Camp at Fredericksburgh. Parsons' military opinions. Camp at Redding 187

CHAPTER XVII

February—June, 1779

Parsons in command at New London. Correspondence with Washington and Greene. The right of private warfare. Returns to Redding. Commands the Division. The march to the Highlands 217

CHAPTER XVIII

May—December, 1779

Clinton's expedition up the Hudson. Tryon's raid on New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk. Wayne retakes Stony Point. Sullivan's expedition against the Six Nations. Parsons succeeds Putnam in the command of the Connecticut Division 245

CHAPTER XIX

December, 1779—July, 1780

Winter quarters at Morristown. The spy system of the Revolution. "Midshipman Billy." Parsons asks Congress to accept his resignation. His estate. Supervises recruiting in Connecticut. Condition of the army 272

CHAPTER XX

July—October, 1780

The summer of 1780. Arrival of Ternay and Rochambeau. Arnold in command at West Point. His treason. Heron delivers to Parsons Arnold's letter to André. Parsons' ill-health 296

CHAPTER XXI

October, 1780—May, 1781

Parsons' promotion as Major General. Mutiny of the Pennsylvania and Jersey Lines. Morrisania expedition. Receives thanks of Congress. Fairfield investigation. His dangerous illness. Yale and Harvard confer upon him a Master's degree 317

CHAPTER XXII

June—October, 1781

The march of the French army through Connecticut. Junction of the two armies on the Hudson. Failure of the attempt on New York. Letters of Washington, Parsons, and Trumbull. Reconnaisance in force. Abandonment of the siege. The Allies move to Virginia. Surrender of Cornwallis 361

CHAPTER XXIII

August, 1781—July, 1782

Heath commands in the Highlands. Parsons takes charge of the defense of Connecticut. Prepares to attack Lloyd's Neck. Heath fails to support him. The Connecticut troops winter in the Highlands. As to disabled officers. Parsons' farewell address to his troops. Resigns his commission as Major General 394

CHAPTER XXIV

1780—1781

William Heron of Redding and Sir Henry Clinton's "Secret Service Record" 418

CHAPTER XXV

July, 1782—October, 1786

Shay's Rebellion. Letters to Johnson. Appointed Commissioner to treat with the Shawanese. Journey to the Miami. Visits the Falls of the Ohio. Negotiations with the Indians. Treaty concluded February first. Terms of the treaty. Letter to President Willard giving an account of his observations and discoveries in the Ohio country . . 461

CHAPTER XXVI

January, 1786—April, 1789

The Ohio Company. Parsons presents memorial to Congress for the purchase of lands in Ohio. Bill authorizing sale to Company. Ordinance of 1787. Organization of the Northwest Territory. Parsons appointed Chief Judge. Ratification of the Federal Constitution and organization of the government 495

CHAPTER XXVII

December, 1787—December, 1788

Settlement of Ohio. Letters to General Washington and Dr. Cutler. Arrival of St. Clair, Parsons and Varnum and the establishment of civil government in the Territory. They prepare a code of laws. Celebration of the Fourth of July. Parsons' Thanksgiving sermon. The importance of the new settlement 515

CHAPTER XXVIII

1789—1790

The Connecticut Reserve. Parsons appointed to survey it. Forms syndicate to buy lands in. At Philadelphia for the Ohio Company. Returning, visits Gen. Gates. Chief Justice Ellsworth. Thirteenth anniversary of Independence celebrated at Marietta. Appointed to treat with the Indians on the Reserve. Goes to Lake Erie to complete the surveys. Returning, is drowned in Great Beaver Creek. Body found and buried; afterwards removed to New Brighton. Letters from Gen. Butler and Lieut. McDowell. Parsons' family. His career and character 548

Life and Letters of General Samuel Holden Parsons

CHAPTER I

The Days After Lexington and Concord. The Organization and Officers of the Connecticut Line.

1775—1788

The fighting at Lexington and Concord was still in progress when the Massachusetts Committee of Safety at Watertown sent out "horse expresses charged to alarm the country quite down to Connecticut." It was not long after the noon of Thursday, the 20th of April, 1775, that the news reached Jonathan Trumbull, the War Governor of Connecticut, at his home in Lebanon, and not many hours after this before he had issued his Proclamation convening the General Assembly in special session at Hartford the following Wednesday, April 26th. At this session, which lasted ten days, an Act was passed providing for the enlistment and equipment of one-fourth of the militia, about six thousand men, to be distributed into six regiments of ten companies each, with a full complement of field, staff and line officers, and to serve for seven months. This force was to be commanded by one major general and two brigadier generals. All the officers were appointed by the Assembly. David Wooster was made major general and colonel of the First Regiment; Joseph Spencer and Israel Putnam were made brigadier generals and colonels, respectively, of the Second and Third Regiments; and Benjamin Hinman, David Waterbury and Samuel Holden Parsons were made colonels in the order named of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Regiments and also captains, each of the first company of his regiment. This peculiar arrangement extended to the lieutenant colonels and

majors, who were made captains of the second and third companies of their respective regiments. In July two more regiments were raised, to be commanded by Colonels Charles Webb and Jedidiah Huntington, making eight regiments in all, consisting of seventy-four hundred men and including all who served that year outside the limits of the State. Of these eight regiments, the five under Spencer, Putnam, Parsons, Webb and Huntington, were ordered to the Boston camps under Washington, while the remaining three under Wooster, Hinman and Waterbury, were sent to the Northern Department. These regiments up to this point were State troops, not militia, but volunteer regiments enlisted by the State from the militia for a special purpose; but in July following, the entire force was placed upon a Continental Establishment and, as Washington expressed it, became the "troops of the United Provinces of North America." These troops were the "regulars" of the Revolution, "Continentals," as they were called, and formed the main army in the field and the chief dependence of the Colonial cause. These eight regiments were the beginning of what later on was known as the "Conn ut Line."

The militia of Connecticut averaged during the war about twenty-three thousand men, and was divided into twenty-eight regiments of infantry and five regiments of light horse. These organizations were frequently called out to assist in emergencies and furnished the levies made from time to time for special service, as for "Coast Guards," when they were known as State troops.

The terms of enlistment of most of the regiments called out in 1775 expiring in December of that year, Congress early in the autumn prepared to organize a new army for the year 1776. After consultation it was determined to raise, exclusive of riflemen and artillery, twenty-six regiments of foot of eight companies each, to serve until January 1, 1777. The quota for Connecticut was five regiments. The twenty-six regiments were numbered consecutively without regard to the State from which they were enlisted. In the readjustment, Parsons' regiment became the 10th Continental Foot; Huntington's the 17th; Webb's the 19th; Benedict Arnold's (formerly Putnam's) the 20th and Wyllys' (formerly Spencer's) the 22d.

These regiments remained before Boston until its evacuation by the British, when they marched to New York. Early in 1776, Congress authorized two additional regiments under Burrall and Elmore to serve in the Northern Department, and another in May under Ward, to serve in New York.

The experience of the first two years of the war had made it obvious that in order to provide a well-drilled and disciplined army, able to cope with British regulars, the enlistments must be for a longer term. Accordingly, Congress provided for the raising of eighty-eight regiments of eight companies each, to serve for three years or during the war. The Connecticut quota under this call was eight regiments. Instead of being numbered consecutively as under the organization of 1776, the regiments of each State were numbered by themselves and spoken of as the "Massachusetts Line," or the "Connecticut Line," each being a distinct body, commanded by its own officers and cared for by its own State as well as by Congress. These State Lines as a body formed the "Continental Line," or the regular army of the United Colonies. This change in the organization f that of the previous year, was a surface indication of the jeal y of the central government felt by the States—a jealousy by no mea s allayed by the prodigality with which Congress distributed commissions to foreign adventurers, thereby preventing the due promotion of meritorious American officers. The new organization was to date from January 1, 1777. The Connecticut troops were divided into two brigades of four regiments each. The First Brigade, composed of the 3d, 4th, 6th and 8th Regiments, was placed under the command of General Samuel Holden Parsons, and the Second, composed of the 1st, 2d, 5th and 7th Regiments, was given to General Jedidiah Huntington.

In October, 1780, Congress provided for a reorganization of the army, reducing the number of regiments, but increasing the complement of each, so that the number of men in the field should remain the same. The Connecticut quota was thus reduced from eight regiments to five. The effect of the consolidation was to retire many officers, but it increased the efficiency of the regiments. A new formation went into effect January 11, 1783. The five Connecticut regiments were

reduced to three, forming a single brigade under the command of General Huntington. In the early summer the greater part of the troops were disbanded and a single Connecticut regiment only, under the command of Colonel Swift, was retained until December, when its discharge was ordered; and thus disappeared the last of the Connecticut Line of the Revolutionary Army.

During the whole war but six general officers in the Continental or regular army were appointed from the State of Connecticut. The first three appointments were made from the veterans of the French and Indian War, the school in which many of our best officers had acquired their military experience. Israel Putnam of Pomfret, who had served as major and lieutenant colonel, and was the senior officer present in command at Bunker Hill, was made major general, June 19, 1775, superseding Wooster and Spencer, both of whom were his seniors in age and command. He was at this time fifty-seven years old. David Wooster of New Haven, who had served as colonel, and Joseph Spencer of East Haddam, who had been a major and lieutenant colonel, were made brigadier generals, June 22, 1775. Wooster at this time was sixty-five and Spencer sixty-one. Neither of these officers served till the close of the war. Wooster was ordered to the Northern Department and served with Montgomery through the disastrous campaign in Canada. Upon his return to Connecticut, he was given the command of the militia stationed on the Westchester border. During the Tryon-Danbury raid, he fell, mortally wounded, while rallying his men, and died, May 2, 1777. Spencer, during the siege of Boston, commanded a brigade composed of the regiments of Parsons, Huntington, Wyllys and Charles Webb, and accompanied it when, with the rest of the army, it marched to New York. August 9, 1776, just previous to the battle of Long Island, he was promoted to the rank of major general and given the command of a division composed of Parsons' and Wadsworth's brigades, the first Continentals and the latter militia. He remained with the army after the retreat to White Plains until December of that year, when he was ordered to take command of the troops in Rhode Island. An attack on Newport planned by him miscarried, and an investigation having

been ordered by Congress after he had been exonerated by a court-martial, he resigned his commission in December, 1777, and it was accepted in the January following. Putnam by virtue of his seniority commanded the Connecticut Division, but he was much of the time with the main army under Washington where he exercised a more general command. In 1776 he served in New Jersey. In 1777 he was stationed in the Highlands, charged with guarding West Point and the shores of the Sound. In 1778 he was assigned to the command of the Virginia Line, and in 1779 commanded the right wing of the army west of the Hudson. In December of this year he was stricken with paralysis and incapacitated for farther service. Benedict Arnold of New Haven, the youngest of all the appointees of Congress from Connecticut—being at this time but thirty-six years old—and perhaps the best fighter, was made brigadier general January 10, 1776, and major general, May 2, 1777. His principal and most conspicuous service was in Canada and the Northern Department, but the unusually brilliant record then made was completely effaced by his treason of September, 1780, and his villainous conduct during the rest of the war. By order of Congress, October 4, 1780, his name was stricken from the rolls. Samuel Holden Parsons of New London, colonel of the 6th Connecticut in 1775 and afterwards of the 10th Continental, and senior colonel in the Connecticut Line, was appointed brigadier general, August 9, 1776, to succeed Spencer, appointed major general the same day. Parsons was assigned to the command of the First Brigade, which, with Wadsworth's, formed Spencer's Division. At this time he was thirty-nine years old. October 23, 1780, after Putnam had been incapacitated, he was appointed major general and became of right, as for a year and a half previous he had been in fact, the commander of the Connecticut Division. Parsons remained in command until June 1782, when he was compelled by ill health to resign his commission, the acceptance of which was delayed by Congress until the 22d of July. Jedidiah Huntington of Norwich, who in 1777 was Colonel of the First Connecticut and senior colonel in the Division, was appointed brigadier general May 12, 1777, and assigned to the command of the Second Brigade. Upon the promotion of General Par-

sons in 1780, he succeeded to the command of the First Brigade, which he continued to command until the disbandment of the army in 1783. At the time Parsons was made major general, Huntington and himself were the only general officers remaining in the Connecticut Line, although Putnam was still carried on the rolls; and upon Parsons' resignation, Huntington became the senior officer in the State.

Of these six officers, three were college men. Wooster graduated at Yale in the class of 1738. Parsons and Huntington both graduated at Harvard, Parsons in the class of 1756 and Huntington in the class of 1763, and both received honorary degrees from Yale. Wooster served as a general officer nearly two years; Spencer two years and six months; Putnam and Arnold each nearly four and one half years; Huntington six years, and Parsons four years as a colonel and brigadier and two years as major general.

Reviewing the careers of these men, no one of them seems to have been so largely and intimately connected with the affairs and interests of Connecticut as was General Parsons throughout the whole of his active life. A member of the General Assembly at twenty-five and re-elected for twelve successive years; one of a committee composed of the ablest men in his State created to assist Governor Trumbull in prosecuting the claims of Connecticut under her Charter to lands in Pennsylvania; one of the Standing Committee of Correspondence and Inquiry by appointment of the Assembly; a member of the Convention in his State which ratified the Federal Constitution; one of a Commission to extinguish by treaty the Indian titles to the Connecticut Reserve, he was ever active and energetic in the discharge of his public duties, and rendered valuable and faithful service to his State. Zealous in the cause of the Colonies, he was the instigator and promoter of many of the measures which led to the Revolution. He was the first to suggest a General Congress of the Colonies, and with a few friends raised the money for and set on foot as a Connecticut enterprise, the expedition which captured Ticonderoga. During his service in the army, the responsibility of recruiting, organizing and maintaining the Connecticut Line, and of protecting the State against invasion, devolved largely upon him; and

after the war terminated, and the soldiers had returned impoverished to their homes, it was he who, with Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler, conceived and carried through the project of the Ohio Land Company, thus providing a way by which the officers and soldiers of the Connecticut Line could convert their almost worthless pay-certificates into farms, and secure for themselves homes in their declining years. The record of Parsons' life forms an important part of the history of his native State.

CHAPTER II

The Parsons Lineage and Family Connections.

Samuel Holden Parsons, major general in the Continental army, was born at Lyme, Connecticut, May 14, 1737. The first of his family and name in this country was his great-grandfather, Benjamin Parsons, born in England and baptized in the church in Sanford, March 17, 1627-8. The grandfather and father of Benjamin were Thomas and Hugh Parsons, both country gentlemen of Great Milton, Oxfordshire, England. Upon coming to America, Benjamin settled in Springfield, Mass., some time before 1651, where he became a prominent and influential citizen, a deacon in the church and was elected to many town offices which he administered with ability. His son, Deacon Ebenezer Parsons, the grandfather of the General, was born at Springfield Nov. 17, 1668, and died there at the age of eighty-four years. Jonathan Parsons, his youngest son, and the father of the General, was born at West Springfield, Mass., November 30, 1705, graduated at Yale College in 1729, studied theology under the President, the Rev. Elisha Williams, and afterwards with the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, and was ordained Pastor of the Congregational Church at Lyme, March 17, 1731, when but little more than twenty-five years old. Among the members of his congregation were Judge John Griswold, one of the wealthiest men in the town and the owner of "Black Hall," the family seat of the Griswolds, its beautiful grounds bordering the Sound just east of the mouth of the Connecticut; his son, Matthew, then a boy of seventeen, but some years later the Governor of the State; his daughter, Phebe, not yet quite sixteen, "bright, witty and vivacious," and her "dashing sisters, so given to all manner of outdoor sports as to be known as the 'Black Hall Boys.'" To this fun-loving family the young minister was strongly attracted, so strongly, indeed, that in the following December, Phebe became his wife.

This marriage may not have been for Parsons himself "the tide which taken at its flood leads on to fortune," but it certainly had a very positive and determining influence upon the fortunes of his son, Samuel Holden, by placing him in an environment which ensured his early and rapid advancement. From the earliest days of the Colony there had been a few leading families to whose wisdom and public spirit the government of the Colony and State had been chiefly intrusted. Able, educated, of high character and social prestige, the Colonists looked to them as best fitted to manage affairs. Accustomed to a governing class, they had no more feeling of envy or jealousy in committing to them the care of the public interests, than they had in intrusting matters in litigation to those learned in the law.

Having been tried and found capable and faithful, these families, by the voluntary and repeated acts of the people themselves, became as truly "hereditary legislators" (for there was little rotation in office) as though to the purple born; and the same deference and respect was accorded them which they had customarily shown to the same class in their English homes.

Of this class there were no more notable examples in Connecticut than the Griswolds and Wolcotts. Henry Wolcott was a country gentleman of Tolland, Somersetshire, and heir to the Manor of Galdon. He emigrated with the Dorchester Company in 1630, and in 1636 removed to Windsor, Connecticut. Preparatory to leaving England, he sold property to the amount of eight thousand pounds and brought over with him a large sum of money. He was made a member of the first General Court of Massachusetts, a deputy to the General Court of Connecticut in 1637, and in 1643 was chosen magistrate and annually re-elected until his death. Matthew Griswold, believed to be descended from the heraldic family of Greswolds in Warwickshire, came to America and settled in Windsor in 1639. In 1646 he married a daughter of Henry Wolcott and soon after removed to Saybrook as the agent of Governor Fenwick.

He took up the first tract of land in Lyme, and became one of the largest landholders in that town; and was several times

deputy to the General Court. His son, Matthew, lived in Lyme and added to the family domain, which extended for several miles along the Sound. He was deputy several years and one of the Governor's Assistants. His son was Judge John Griswold, the father of Phebe Parsons. Henry Wolcott's youngest son Simon, married Martha Pitkin, "a gentlewoman of bright natural parts which were improved by her education in the city of London," a sister of William Pitkin the Attorney General and Treasurer of the Colony. Roger Wolcott, son of Simon and Martha, a very able man, was successively member of the Council, Judge of the County and Superior Court, Deputy Governor and Chief Justice, Major General in the Louisburg campaign and Governor of Connecticut. His daughter, Ursula Wolcott, married her cousin, Matthew Griswold, brother of Phebe Parsons and the future Governor of the State, thus uniting a second time these two distinguished families.

The manner in which high office was continued in certain families in Colonial times cannot be better illustrated than by noting the relatives, descendants, and marriage connections of Ursula (Wolcott) Griswold. Her father, her brother, her husband, her son, her nephew and four of her cousins were governors of Connecticut. Her father was a major general in the Colonial army, and her brothers, Erastus and Oliver, generals in the army of the Revolution. Her son was offered the post of Secretary of War. One of her nephews was Washington's Secretary of the Treasury; another, Samuel Holden Parsons, was a major general in the Continental army and Chief Judge of the Northwest Territory; another, James Hillhouse, was for sixteen years a senator in Congress. Her cousin, Oliver Ellsworth, was Chief Justice of the United States. Stephen Titus Hosmer, who married her grandniece, Lucia Parsons, was Chief Justice of Connecticut. The circle of her descendants and connections comprised sixteen governors of States, forty-three distinguished judges and many other men of eminence in the State. It was into this environment that Samuel Holden Parsons was born.

The Salisbury Genealogies describe Jonathan Parsons as "a man of uncommon genius, eminent as a scholar, a ready and correct writer, rich in imagination, with a clear, commanding

and persuasive voice, and easy and polished in his manners." During the early years of his ministry he taught his people rather to rest on their own righteousness for salvation than to depend alone on that of Christ; but after a severe and prolonged mental struggle, the clouds seemed to clear away, and the doctrine of salvation by faith burst as a "New Light" on his mind. At this time George Whitefield was holding revival meetings throughout the country, and with him and with the new views of which he was the eloquent advocate, Mr. Parsons was in hearty sympathy. The two became very close friends.

But the "New Light" theology, as it was called, and the ministerial methods which grew out of it, created great opposition to his work, and the contention at length became so sharp that in 1745, after a pastorate of fourteen years, Mr. Parsons resigned his charge. The following month he was called to the new church at Newburyport, Mass., and installed as its Pastor in March, 1746. This pastorate continued happily for thirty years until his death.

Mr. Parsons was a firm, uncompromising advocate of civil and religious liberty. His loyalty was to the people and not to the crown. What he believed he preached, and when the struggle against British oppression commenced, he and his people were united. There was tea burned in his congregation before the "Mohawks" did their work in Boston Harbor, and he had so trained the young women of his church that of their own free will they settled the question of taxation by using herbs from the pastures instead of tea imported in British ships.

On the 19th of July, 1776, Jonathan Parsons died, but he had lived long enough to hear Independence declared and to see his son, Samuel Holden, in command of a regiment at Bunker Hill. Whitefield had died six years before at Parsons' house and been laid in a vault built, in accordance with his oft-expressed wish, beneath Parsons' pulpit. Parsons was laid beside him in the same vault. The remains of these two men, who lived in perfect sympathy with each other, are to this day venerated as the relics of the saints in all the country about.

Of Mr. Parsons' children, his daughter, Lydia, married Moses Greenleaf of Newburyport and was the mother of Simon Greenleaf, the distinguished professor of law at Harvard University and the author of a standard work on Evidence. The grandson of his son Jonathan, Isaac Rand Jackson, was Chargé d'Affaires at Copenhagen, and married Louise C. Carroll of Philadelphia, granddaughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

CHAPTER III

Parsons Graduates at Harvard and Studies Law. The French and Indian War and the Events Between 1762 and 1775.

General Parsons was but nine years old when his father removed to Newburyport. Here he prepared for college, but his studies, aside from the meager facilities afforded by the town schools, must have been pursued largely under his father's direction. Entering Harvard at fifteen, he graduated with the class of 1756, at the age of nineteen, and received from the college both a Bachelor's and Master's degree. Except for the accident of his removal to Newburyport, Yale, his father's college, instead of Harvard, would doubtless have been his Alma Mater; but twenty-five years later, in 1781, in recognition of eminent services, Yale bestowed upon him an honorary degree at the same commencement at which she conferred a similar degree on General Washington. After his graduation, young Parsons returned to Lyme, where he pursued his legal studies under the direction of his accomplished uncle, Governor Matthew Griswold. In 1759, when twenty-two years old, he was admitted to the bar of New London County and settled at Lyme in the practice of the law.

Among his college mates were John Hancock (1754), President of the Continental Congress; Jonathan Trumbull (1759), son of the War Governor of Connecticut, afterwards himself Governor and a Senator of the United States; and John Adams (1755), who succeeded Washington in the Presidency. Parsons' relations with Adams were more than usually intimate, both having the profession of law in view. The following very student-like letter written to Parsons by Adams from his home in Braintree, Dec. 5, 1760, is interesting as showing the devotion of both to their chosen profession:

SIR.—I presume upon the merit of a brother, both in the academical and legal family, to give you this trouble, and to ask the favor of your correspondence. The science which we have bound ourselves to study for life you know to be immensely voluminous, perhaps intricate and involved, so that an arduous application to books at home, a critical observation of the course of practice, the conduct of the older practitioners in courts, and a large correspondence with fellow students abroad, as well as conversation in private companies upon legal subjects, are needful to gain a thorough mastery, if not to make a decent figure in the profession of law. The design of this letter then, is to desire that you would write me a report of any cause of importance and curiosity, either in courts of Admiralty or Common Law, that you hear resolved in your Colony. And on my part I am ready and engage to do the same of any causes that I shall hear argued in this Province. It is an employment that gives me pleasure, and I find that revolving a case in my mind, stating it on paper, recollecting the arguments on each side and examining the points through my books that occur in the course of a trial, make the impression deeper on my memory and lets me easier into the spirit of law and practice. In view, I send you the report of a cause argued in Boston last term, and should be glad to know if the points, whether the statutes of mortmain, were ever stirred in your Colony, and by what criterion you determine what statutes are, and what are not, extended to you. [Here follows the case reported.]

In September, 1761, at the age of twenty-four, the young lawyer married Mehetable Mather, daughter of Richard Mather of Lyme, a lineal descendant of the first Richard who came from England and settled in Dorchester. She was born in Lyme March 7, 1743, and died in Middletown, Connecticut, August 7, 1802, and is buried in the old cemetery in that city. The marriage of General Parsons and Mehetable Mather is described as having been a very important event in Lyme. The whole town was invited to the ceremony, which, on account of the great number of guests, was held in an orchard adjacent to the house.

At the very last moment, as tradition has it, it was discovered that a very important personage by some strange oversight had been forgotten, and the wedding was delayed until a messenger could be dispatched to bring him. The wedding cake

was of immense size, an entire barrel of flour having been consumed in its making.

The period between Parsons' graduation and his entrance upon public life in 1762, was filled with stirring events well calculated to impress his youthful mind. It was the period of the French and Indian War, which very properly has been regarded as introductory to the War of Independence—a war which, although exhausting to the Colonies, proved for them a most valuable school of military science, made them conscious of their strength, created in them a feeling of self-reliance, of manhood, as it were, and of independence, and above all taught them the value of united action in resisting the oppressive policy of Great Britain. The conflict originated between the French and English colonies in a dispute as to territorial rights. The French claimed all the territory watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries, and had surrounded the English settlements with a cordon of fortifications, more than sixty in number, extending from Montreal on the north to New Orleans on the south. The English, on the other hand, insisted that under their ancient charters they were entitled westward to the Pacific and northward to the latitude of the north shore of Lake Erie. Alarmed by a Crown grant to the Ohio Company of a large tract of land on the southeast bank of the Ohio, the French commenced to build forts between the Alleghany river and Lake Erie near the present western line of Pennsylvania. A counter-move was made by the Ohio Company by commencing a fort on the present site of Pittsburgh, which the French immediately captured and completed under the name of Fort Du Quesne. In 1754, Washington was sent with about one hundred and fifty men to retake the Fort, but being met by a force ten times his number, was compelled to retire and return to Virginia. In 1755 occurred the disastrous defeat of General Braddock while engaged in the same attempt. The mother countries having taken the part of their respective colonies, war became inevitable and was formally declared in 1756 and continued until 1763, when a definitive treaty of peace was signed by which France ceded to Great Britain all her possessions in America east of the Mississippi. At the same time Spain ceded Florida to the English Crown.

The war was entered upon with great enthusiasm by the Colonists, but the campaigns of 1756 and 1757 utterly failed through the incompetency of the British officers in command. That of 1756 resulted in the loss of the Fort at Oswego; of 1757 in the capture of Fort William Henry by the French and the complete miscarriage of the formidable expedition against Louisburg. William Pitt having come into power, competent officers were placed in command and new energy infused into the war, the effect of which was evident in the results of the campaign of 1758. Louisburg was captured and Fort Frontenac, now Kingston, on the St. Lawrence, but the attempt on Ticonderoga proved a miserable failure. In 1759, Pitt conceived a scheme of terminating the war and putting an end to French dominion in America, by a single stroke; Amherst was to take Ticonderoga; Johnson, Fort Niagara; and Wolfe, Quebec; all of which was successfully accomplished. The following year Montreal was surrendered with all the other French posts in Canada. This ended the war in the North, but in the southern Colonies and the West Indies it lingered through 1761 and 1762 until the treaty of peace in 1763. The experiences and lessons of this war had not been forgotten by the Colonists when, twelve years later, the opening gun of the Revolution was heard.

The events of the period between 1763 and 1775, when Parsons entered the army, were even more engrossing than those of the war just closed, because directly affecting the liberty and property of the Colonists. For more than a hundred years it had been the policy of Great Britain to make its Colonies subservient to the interests of British commerce. Navigation acts, tariff acts and acts suppressing manufactures had been passed with this object in view. These acts, however, had not been very rigidly enforced and the Colonists were disposed to forget past grievances in the hope that justice would be done them in future. But the close of the war found the British Treasury empty and means must be devised to replenish it. The war had disclosed the resources of the Colonies and acts were passed to force from them a contribution. In 1765 the Stamp Act was passed, but was so vigorously opposed that it was repealed the following year. In 1767 a tariff was enacted

levying duties on tea and other articles. Troops were sent over to enforce coercive measures and a collision and bloodshed was the result. In April, 1770, the tariff was repealed as to all articles except tea, in the belief that the slight duty upon it would be paid without complaint. But the Government misapprehended the issue. It was not the size of the tax, but the right to tax at all without the consent of the Colonies that was in question, and the cargoes of tea sent here were either not permitted to land, or, as in Boston, were thrown into the Harbor.

The exasperated Parliament passed five retaliatory acts and among them, an act known as the Boston Port Bill, closing the Port to all commercial transactions and removing the Custom House, Courts and other public offices to Salem. Business was prostrated and great distress ensued, but food was sent to the suffering people from the different Colonies, and even the city of London subscribed one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the poor of Boston.

It was then that the Colonists began preparations for war.

CHAPTER IV

PARSONS A MEMBER OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND OF THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE. IS THE FIRST TO SUGGEST A CONGRESS OF ALL THE COLONIES. CAPTURE OF TICONDEROGA.

1762—1775

IN 1762, at the age of twenty-five, Mr. Parsons was elected a member of the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, and was continuously re-elected until his removal to New London in 1774, a period of twelve years. During this time he received repeated proofs of public confidence in various appointments of honor and trust. In May, 1768, he was appointed Auditor "to settle and adjust the Colony accounts with the Treasurer and all others who have received any of the moneys that belong to the Colony." In 1769, the same appointment was continued with "further powers to renew and better secure the moneys and estate due on mortgages, bonds or other securities belonging to this Colony, which are in danger of being lost."

In October, 1773, under an act of the General Court "concerning the western lands, so called, lying westward of the Delaware River within the boundaries of this Colony," he was appointed and associated with the Hon. Matthew Griswold, Eliphalet Dyer, Roger Sherman, William Samuel Johnson, Silas Deane, William Williams and Jedediah Strong on a committee with full power to assist his Honor Governor Trumbull in taking "proper steps to pursue the claim of the Colony of Connecticut to said western lands; and any three of said committee were authorized and directed to proceed to Philadelphia to treat with his Honor Governor Penn and the agents of the Proprietaries respecting an amicable agreement concerning the boundaries of this Colony and the Province of Pennsylvania; or if the Proprietaries should so prefer, to join with them in an application to his Majesty for commissioners to settle

such boundaries. The Committee was likewise empowered to treat with respect to the peace of the inhabitants who are settled upon said lands, and to agree upon such measures as shall prevent violence and contention." In January, 1774, the same Committee was "appointed and empowered to assist his Honor Governor Trumbull in collecting and preparing all exhibits and documents necessary to prosecute the claim and title of the Colony to the lands lying within the boundaries of the grant and Charter of the Colony west of the Delaware River, in the Courts of Great Britain, and to make a proper statement of the case to be transmitted to Great Britain for that purpose." Connecticut claimed under its Charter the north two-fifths of Pennsylvania, but the land immediately in dispute was the Wyoming District which had been settled by Connecticut people. Mr. Parsons was an active member of the Committee and contributed materially to the object of its appointment; but the labors of the Committee proved of no avail, for the war with Great Britain prevented the proposed submission to the English Courts, and the Commission appointed in 1782 to determine the controversy, as provided by the Articles of Confederation, after a protracted hearing, decided adversely to the claims of Connecticut.

In November, 1773, Mr. Parsons was appointed King's, or prosecuting, Attorney for New London County. In May, 1774, the General Assembly appointed him agent for the Colony, "to sue and collect all claims due the Colony from persons residing in New London County, and to recover all lands belonging to the Colony which were unduly detained, with full power to appear before any court or courts of judicature and represent said Colony."

In May, 1773, the House of Representatives of the Colony of Connecticut, in response to certain resolutions passed by the House of Burgesses of the Colony of Virginia the previous March, resolved as follows:—

Resolved, That a Standing Committee of Correspondence and Enquiry to consist of nine persons, viz: the Hon. Ebenezer Silliman, Esq., William Williams, Benjamin Payne, Samuel Holden Parsons, Nathaniel Wales, Silas Deane, Samuel Bishop, Joseph

Trumbull and Erastus Wolcott, Esq., be, and hereby is, appointed, whose business it shall be to obtain all such intelligence, and take up and maintain correspondence with our sister Colonies respecting the important considerations mentioned and expressed in the aforesaid resolutions of the patriotic House of Burgesses of Virginia, and the result of such their proceedings from time to time to lay before this House.

Resolved, That the Speaker of this House do transmit to the Speakers of the different Assemblies of the British Colonies on this Continent, copies of these resolutions, and request that they would come into similar measures, and communicate from time to time with the said Committee on all matters wherein the common welfare and safety of the Colonies are concerned.

In response to this appeal, similar committees were appointed by all the Colonies, and to their earnest and patriotic efforts was largely due the concert of action on the part of the Colonies in resisting the claims of Great Britain. Mr. Parsons was a very active and energetic member of this Committee and very zealous in the cause of the Colonies. Previous to his appointment he had corresponded with the leaders of the opposition in Massachusetts, and in a letter to Samuel Adams, written March 3, 1773, originated the suggestion of assembling the first Congress of all the Colonies which subsequently met at Philadelphia. This honor was claimed in 1841 by his biographer for Samuel Adams, but he could not have been aware of the existence of this letter the original of which was among the papers of Mr. Adams in the possession of Mr. Bancroft—a letter so full of fervent patriotism that it may not be amiss to insert it here entire:—

March 3, 1773.

Sir.—When the spirit of patriotism seems expiring in America in general, it must afford a very sensible pleasure to the friends of American liberty to see the noble efforts of our Boston friends in support of the rights of America, as well as their unshaken resolution in opposing any, the least invasion of their charter privileges. I was called to my father's on a very melancholy occasion, and designed to have seen you before my return, but some unforeseen difficulties prevented. I therefore take the liberty to propose to your consideration whether it would not be advisable in the present

critical situation of the colonies, to revive an institution which had formerly a very salutary effect—I mean *an annual meeting of commissioners from the colonies to consult on their general welfare.* You may recollect this took place about the year 1636, and was continued to 1684, between the United Colonies of New England. Although they had no decisive authority of themselves, yet here everything was concerted which will be easily suggested to your mind. If we were to take our connection with Great Britain into consideration, it would render the measure convenient, as at present our state of independence on one another is attended with very manifest inconvenience. I have time only *to suggest the thought to you,* who I know can improve more on the subject than is in my power, had I time. The idea of inalienable allegiance to any prince or state, is an idea to me inadmissible; and I cannot but see that our ancestors, when they first landed in America, were as independent of the crown or king of Great Britain, as if they never had been his subjects; and the only rightful authority derived to him over this people, was by explicit covenant contained in the first charters. These are but broken hints of sentiments I wish I was at liberty more fully to explain.

I am, sir, in haste, with esteem, your most obedient servant.

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Mr. Samuel Adams, in Boston.

Forwarded by Mr. Howe.

The two following letters, the first of which is in the Emmet collection in the Lenox Library, and the second of which was found among the Adams papers, were evidently from their style written by Parsons, and evince a vigilance in the cause of the Colonies and a bold patriotism and determined spirit of resistance to oppression worthy of note.

HARTFORD, *June 16, 1772.*

GENTLEMEN.—We are informed that the House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts have obtained from England sundry original letters from divers persons in that and the neighboring governments of an extraordinary nature tending to subvert the Constitution of the Colonies in general and of that Province in particular.

That some of these letters are from persons in this Colony. We request you to communicate to us such letters in particular as were written by any person or persons in this Colony, and any others

you may think proper. We shall be glad to be advised of the steps taken with those offenders within your Province that similar measures may be adopted here with such traitors.

The Colonies are all embarked in the same general cause. A union in sentiment and measures are of the utmost importance effectually to oppose the wicked designs of our common enemies, and on that ground we shall at all times gladly lend our aid in every measure tending to support and defend that general cause.

We are with great truth and regard, Gentlemen, your most obedient and humble servants,

ERASTUS WOLCOTT.
NATH. WALES JR.
SAM. H. PARSONS.
JOS. TRUMBULL.

To John Hancock, Esq., and the rest of the Committee of Correspondence in the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

HARTFORD, *May 17, 1774.*

GENTLEMEN.—This moment a post from New York arrived here on his road to Boston with intelligence of the spirit and firmness with which the inhabitants of that city concur with the friends of America in support of the cause of our country. We cannot suffer him to pass without informing you, who immediately feel the effects of ministerial despotism, that the American cause, the state of the town of Boston in particular, and the effect and operation of the late detestable act of an abandoned and venal Parliament, were this day brought before our House of Assembly for consideration; and, on discussing the matter, there is no reason to doubt a hearty, spirited concurrence of our Assembly in every proper measure for the redress of our wrongs. A committee is appointed to report proper measures to be pursued, and make drafts for the declaration of our rights, &c., which will probably be reported and passed this week, a copy of which will be transmitted as soon as possible. We consider the cause the common cause of all the Colonies, and doubt not the concurrence of all to defend and support you. Let us play the man for the cause of our Country and trust the event to Him who orders all events for the best good of his people.

We should not have written you at this time, and when no more of our Committee are present, but that your distressed condition requires the aid of every friend for your relief. We cannot be warranted in having this made public as from our Committee, there not being a quorum present, but you are at liberty to use it as from

us personally, if it can in the least tend to strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of those in distress.

We are, Gentlemen, your friends and countrymen, the Committee of Correspondence at Hartford,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.
NATHANIEL WALES JR.

To the Committee of Correspondence at Boston.

The "late detestable act" referred to, is the Boston Port Bill, which was creating great distress in Boston.

By a resolution of the House of Representatives of Connecticut, passed June 3, 1774, the Committee of Correspondence was empowered to appoint a suitable number of delegates to attend a General Congress to consult and advise on proper measures for advancing the best good of the Colonies. In pursuance of this resolution, the Committee met at New London, July 13, 1774, and appointed Eliphalet Dyer, William Samuel Johnson, Erastus Wolcott, Silas Deane, and Richard Law as such delegates. Messrs. Johnson, Wolcott, and Law being unable to accept, the Committee met at Hartford in August and appointed in their stead, Roger Sherman and Joseph Trumbull, who, with Messrs. Dyer and Deane, represented the Colony of Connecticut in the first General Congress of the Colonies, which assembled at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia, September 5, 1774. Mr. Parsons' activity and earnestness in this matter is apparent from his letter to Mr. Trumbull respecting the meeting of the Committee, dated, New London, July 28th, when he says:—

I hope no business of a private nature will divert you from attending to this important public business. As the eyes of all the Continent are upon the Congress for relief, so I think we should be unpardonable to suffer small things to divert us from attending to make this appointment.

The action of the Connecticut Legislature in resolving to appoint delegates to the Congress was immediately communicated by the Committee of Correspondence to the Committee at Boston and to the House of Representatives of Massachusetts. The House, in consequence, on motion of

Samuel Adams, adopted a similar resolution. To Connecticut, therefore, belongs the honor of first suggesting and first acting upon the matter of a Congress of all the American Colonies, the first suggestion having been made by Mr. Parsons in his letter of March 3, 1773, to Samuel Adams, and the first action having been taken by the Connecticut Legislature, June 3, 1774, in passing the resolution to appoint delegates, of which Legislature Mr. Parsons was a prominent and influential member.

Connecticut is also entitled to the credit of originating and setting on foot the expedition against Ticonderoga, "to which," says Governor Hall in his Early History of Vermont, "belongs the honor of compelling the first surrender of the British flag to the coming republic." The facts of the expedition, about which there has been some controversy, are briefly as follows. On the 26th of April, 1775, Mr. Parsons, returning to Hartford from Massachusetts, where he had gone immediately upon the receipt of the news of Lexington and Concord, which had been fought the week before, met Benedict Arnold, then captain of a company of volunteers on his way to the camp at Cambridge, who, as we learn from a letter written by Parsons to his classmate, Joseph Trumbull, April 26, 1775, "gave him an account of the state of Ticonderoga, and that a great number of brass cannon were there." The project of surprising the Fort must have been talked over between them, but which one suggested the enterprise is not certain, for on the 30th, Arnold proposed the matter to the Massachusetts Committee and was commissioned colonel and authorized to raise troops for the purpose; and Parsons, immediately upon his arrival at Hartford, called upon Colonel Samuel Wyllys of Hartford and Silas Deane of Wethersfield, and with them, as he says in his letter to Trumbull, "first undertook and projected taking that Fort &c, and with the assistance of other persons procured money men &c." On the 28th, Parsons, Wyllys, Deane, Thomas Mumford of Groton and Adam Babcock of New Haven, borrowed from the Colonial treasury three hundred pounds, for which they gave their own "promissory receipts." As success depended on secrecy and dispatch, they determined to proceed quietly and intrusted the money to Noah Phelps and Bernard Romaine with instructions to "repair to

the New Hampshire Grants and raise there an army of men," and to draw for more money, if necessary, which proved to be the case, as ten pounds was drawn on the 15th, and five hundred pounds on the 17th of May: They left on the same day for Salisbury, where they were joined on the 30th by Captain Edward Mott of Parsons' regiment with five men. Having secured a few additional recruits, the whole party left for Pittsfield, May first, where about sixty men were enlisted, and whence a dispatch was sent to Colonel Ethan Allen, a native of Connecticut, directing him to join them with his "Green Mountain Boys." John Brown of Pittsfield, a lawyer and afterwards a colonel, who in a report to the Massachusetts Committee in March, 1775, had urged the taking of Ticonderoga as soon as possible after the commencement of hostilities, also enlisted when told the object of the expedition. The rendezvous was at Castleton where about two hundred and seventy men assembled and where Arnold joined them with a few followers. On the 9th of May, the expedition crossed the Lake under the command of Colonel Allen, and at the dawn of the next morning the Fort was surprised and taken with all its garrison and stores, without the loss of a single life. Thus was this enterprise projected and carried through without consulting any in authority, solely upon the responsibility and "by the united councils of a number of private gentlemen," who raised the money for the expedition upon their own personal credit, and Mr. Parsons was the moving spirit in the enterprise.

The following memorial and the resolution thereon of the Connecticut Assembly, will be of interest in this connection:—

"To the Honorable General Assembly now sitting, the memorial of Samuel H. Parsons, humbly showeth: That in April, 1775, the memorialist, Mr. Silas Deane and Col. Samuel Wyllys with others, were induced from the particular situation of public affairs, to undertake surprising and seizing the enemy's post at Ticonderoga, without the knowledge and approbation of the Assembly; and to prosecute the business were necessitated to take out a quantity of money from the treasury, for which they gave their promissory receipt; that the whole moneys were delivered to the gentlemen sent on that service, and were actually expended therein. That said

receipts are still held against the promissors, notwithstanding the public have taken the post into their own hands and repaid the expense. Your memorialist, therefore, prays your honors to order said receipts to be given up and the sums thereof be allowed the treasurer in settlement of his accounts with this State.

Dated in Hartford, the 30th of May, 1777.

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

The Assembly acting thereon, after reciting the memorial,

Resolved, That said receipts, given as aforesaid, be delivered up to the memorialist, or some of the persons who executed them, to be cancelled upon their exhibiting and lodging with the Committee of Pay-Table the accounts and vouchers of their disposition and expenditure of the sums contained in said receipts, which are as follows, viz:—one receipt dated 28th April, 1775, for two hundred pounds, signed Thomas Mumford, Samuel H. Parsons, Silas Deane and Samuel Wyllys; one receipt, dated same 28th April, 1775, for one hundred pounds, signed Thomas Mumford, Adam Babcock, Samuel H. Parsons and Silas Deane; one receipt dated 15th May, 1775, for ten pounds, signed Samuel Bishop, William Williams and Samuel H. Parsons; and also one other receipt, dated May 17th, 1775, for five hundred pounds, signed Joshua Porter, Thomas Mumford, Jesse Root, Ezekiel Williams, Samuel Wyllys and Chas. Webb.

And it is further resolved, that the Committee of Pay-Table, upon receiving the said accounts and vouchers of the expenditures of said moneys, charge the account thereof to the Continent, and that the amount of the sums contained in said receipts, be allowed the Treasurer in account with this State on his delivering up said receipts pursuant to this resolution."

The action of the legislature and the original receipts are recorded in the office of the Secretary of State at Hartford. Of the patriotic men who assumed the responsibility of this enterprise, Samuel H. Parsons became a major general in the Continental Army, and Chas. Webb and Samuel Wyllys, colonels in the same army; Silas Deane, at that time a member of the Continental Congress, was afterwards sent to France as the political and financial agent of the colonies; Thomas Mumford, then a member of the Assembly, rendered valuable service to his country all through the war in procuring supplies for the

army. The Committee of the Pay-Table managed all the military finances of the Colony.

The great value of the capture of Ticonderoga cannot be appreciated without understanding the importance of holding the ancient line of communication between the States and Canada by way of the Hudson and Lake Champlain. This was seen and realized during the old French wars, and the central object of the campaigns of 1776 and 1777 on the part of the British Ministry was to obtain control of this line. With New York and Albany in the possession of the British and the Hudson and the Lake patrolled by numerous small vessels, New England would have been effectually isolated from the other Colonies and the rebellion easily put down. The patriots understood this well, hence the prompt surprise of Ticonderoga, the construction of numerous fortifications along the Hudson, and the retention throughout the war of large bodies of troops in the Highlands under the command of the most trusty generals.

CHAPTER V

Siege of Boston. Reorganization of the Army. March to New York.

April, 1775—March, 1776

Under the organization of the Connecticut militia existing before the war, the militia of Lyme and New London belonged to the Third Regiment, the field officers of which in 1774, were Gurdon Saltonstall of New London, colonel, Jabez Huntington of Norwich, lieutenant colonel, and Samuel Holden Parsons of Lyme, major. In 1775, Parsons was made lieutenant colonel in place of Huntington, resigned.

At the special session of the General Assembly, April 26th to May 6th, an act was passed "for assembling and equipping, etc. a number of the inhabitants of this Colony for the special defense and safety thereof," under which six regiments of State troops were raised. Parsons was made colonel of the Sixth Regiment which was recruited in New London and the neighboring towns, his commission dating May 1, 1775. John Tyler, afterwards a brigadier in the militia, was appointed lieutenant colonel, and Samuel Prentice, major. These three Field Officers were also appointed captains of the First, Second and Third Companies respectively. Early in the year, William Coit of New London, a Yale graduate of the class of 1761, had raised and equipped a company composed mostly of New London sailors which he called his "Independent Marines." Parsons, in the capacity of colonel, is recorded as being out with Captain Coit and twenty men of this company for thirty days during the Lexington Alarm, which must have been until nearly the end of May. It is probable that upon the organization of the Sixth Regiment this company enlisted in a body while still in Boston, for Day and Adams continued adjutant and ensign, but this is uncertain as the enlistment rolls are missing, which might well be accounted for if the re-enlistment was made while in camp. Better drilled and equipped than most of the militia,

Coit's was made the Fourth Company, the first after the three of which the Field Officers were captains. October 24th, while yet in Parsons' regiment before Boston, Coit was ordered by General Washington to march with his sailor-soldiers to Plymouth and take command of the privateer, "Harrison." After capturing several prizes, he returned to camp and at the close of the year retired from land service. Captain Coit is described as a "hearty patriot, blunt and jovial, very large in frame, fierce and military in bearing and noted for wearing a scarlet coat." The other captains of Parsons' regiment were James Chapman, Waterman Clift, Edward Mott, Samuel Gale, John Ely and Abel Spicer, who commanded the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Companies in the order named.

By the middle of May nearly the full complement of the Sixth Regiment had been enlisted. In June a review of the regiment was held in New London, which is "believed to have been the first regimental training in the State east of the Connecticut River."

At a meeting of the Governor and Council held at Lebanon June 7, 1775, Colonel Parsons was ordered "to proceed with the company under his immediate command and that under the command of Captain Chapman, to the camp at Boston and join the troops heretofore sent and stationed there by the Hon. Assembly." Captain Mott's company had already been sent to the Northern Department, where he had previously gone with the expedition against Ticonderoga, and Captain Coit's company does not appear to have returned from Boston where it had gone upon the Lexington Alarm. June 17th, the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, the remaining six companies of the regiment, which had been left in New London under the command of Lieut. Colonel Tyler, were also ordered to Boston. Parsons' and Chapman's companies must have reached camp several days before the battle, as it was not more than five or six days march to Boston, but the six companies under Tyler could not have arrived there until a week or more after that event. Parsons encamped in Roxbury, as appears from a letter written by him to his wife, dated, Roxbury, June 21st, and from the following entry in the diary of Lieut. Colonel Experience Storrs of Putnam's regiment, dated June 27th: "Went to Roxbury

with brother Eleazer to see Gen. Spencer, Col. Parsons and Capt. Crafts."

At this time Boston was almost an island, its only connection with the mainland being by a low, narrow isthmus on the Roxbury side. The heights on Dorchester Neck at the south, and the hills on the peninsula of Charlestown at the north, commanded the city, and the fortifying of either would render the city untenable. Perceiving this, General Gage had planned to extend his lines on the 18th to include Charlestown, but information of his intention having reached the American camp, it was determined to anticipate the movement by fortifying Bunker Hill. On the night of June 16th, Colonel Prescott was sent for this purpose with a force of one thousand men detailed from the Massachusetts and Connecticut regiments around Cambridge, two hundred of whom were Connecticut men under Captain Knowlton. Early in the morning of the 17th, the redoubt was completed. Soon after noon the first detachment of the British landed on the northern side of the peninsula near the Mystic River, and so far to the left of the front of the Fort that it was in imminent danger of being flanked. Seeing this, Prescott ordered Knowlton with his Connecticut troops to form behind a post and rail fence set in a low stone wall which extended some fifteen hundred feet from near the Works towards the Mystic River, and oppose any movement of the enemy in that direction. Reinforcements were sadly needed and Prescott had sent messengers urging that they be sent without delay; but Ward, who was in chief command, fearing to weaken his force lest the main attack be made upon Cambridge, refused to send assistance until the landing of the second detachment on the peninsula made obvious the enemy's intention, when he ordered forward the regiments of Stark and Reed. These were all the troops which arrived before the beginning of the attack, but Putnam, ever vigilant and active, had, after the first landing, sent his son with orders to the Connecticut forces at Cambridge to march immediately to Bunker Hill. Chester of Putnam's regiment and the First and Fourth Companies of Parsons' regiment, Coit's and Parsons' own, who seem to have been brought over from Roxbury, hastened forward and joined Knowlton at the rail fence before the battle ended. The British had twice

simultaneously attacked the redoubt and the line at the rail fence, and twice had been hurled back by the withering fire, and this although the advance against the rail fence had been led by Howe in person. Exasperated at their defeat, the enemy again formed for a final assault. Six battalions were concentrated upon the redoubt, attacking it upon all three sides, while the light infantry and the grenadiers were left to continue the attack upon the fence. With numbers reduced and ammunition expended, Prescott was unable but for a brief period to keep back the enemy, and, overwhelmed by superior numbers, ordered a retreat. But Howe's column had not been able to force the line at the fence, and the enemy were held firmly in check until Prescott's men had left the hill, when they too fell back. In the passage across the Charlestown causeway, many were killed by the fire from the ships. As to the precise part taken in the action by Coit's and Parsons' companies, and as to how many of each were present, we have no record; but a letter written by Parsons to his wife four days after the battle, informs us that John Saunders of Lyme, a private in his company, was wounded, not so severely, however, as to prevent him serving until the end of the war, and that Captain Coit had ten wounded, two dangerously so. "The particular account of the battle" which he mentions having written to his uncle, Matthew Griswold, the Deputy Governor, had it been preserved, might furnish the missing details, but enough is said to warrant the inference that some part of Parsons company and the greater part of Coit's was actively engaged. On the night of Saturday, the day of the battle, Parsons seems to have been on duty throughout the night with his whole command.

The following is the letter referred to from General Parsons to his wife:

ROXBURY, *21st June, 1775.*

MY DEAR.—I have wrote the particular account of the battle of Saturday last to the Deputy Govn. which I desired him to show you. I can now only add that on the best information we are since able to procure, the Regulars have made a very dear purchase; tis confidently reported they lost one Genl. Officer, supposed to be Genl. Howe. Major Pitcairn and Major Sheriff are among their dead. In the whole they have lost about 30 officers and not less than 300 privates besides wounded. Many imprudences may be

corrected by us by this dear bought victory of theirs. Each side are making the best preparations in their power for another battle which is soon expected. Lt. Bingham of Lyme who was supposed to be killed, is well and returned to camp safe. Robert Hallum is wounded. He discharged 28 cartridges without retreating one foot, 8 of which was after he was wounded. Thos. Grosvenor is wounded, the ball went twice through his hand and wounded him in the breast afterwards. John Saunders of Lyme wounded. Capt. Coit had 10 wounded, two dangerously; none killed. Capt. Chester, 4 killed and 5 wounded; in the whole from Connecticut about 25 killed and as many wounded. The whole loss on our side not yet ascertained, but I think it will not fall short of 130 killed and wounded. We are raising batteries and should be soon able to do their work if we had powder sufficient, which at present I fear. Many suppose the number of their troops exceed our expectations which must be the case if their number of tents are not for a deception which I suspect it to be. They fought bravely, were twice repulsed by our men and rallied again and forced our intrenchments sword in hand. We have had nothing but a few scattering shot here since Sunday. I am pretty well over the fatigue of Saturday night which I spent on the soft side of a rock on my arms, amidst a cloud of bombs and cannon balls, but thanks to God but two men were killed and about the same number wounded. Billy is well; he is gone to Newbury to-day to buy me some things, as nothing is to be had here. I intend to keep him out of danger if I can. If anybody comes down send me about ten pounds in money if you can. One of Capt. Chester's men killed two regulars and wrenched a gun out of the hands of another and shot him dead and brought off the gun. What my fate will be God only knows. I hope He will give me fortitude in the day of battle and you and me resignation to His will, who always doeth what is best for His people. Pray let me hear from you every week. You must easily imagine my anxiety to hear.

I am, with love to the children,

Yr. affectionate husband,

S. H. Parsons.

Of the persons mentioned in Parsons' letter, Robert Hallum was a sergeant in Coit's company and Thomas Grosvenor and Lieut. Bingham were lieutenants in Putnam's First and Ninth Companies. Billy, was Parsons' eldest son and the Deputy Governor, his uncle.

On the 15th of June, 1775, Washington was elected General

by the Continental Congress assembled at Philadelphia, of which he was a member, and made Commander-in-Chief of the American army. On the 17th, Congress appointed Ward, Lee, Schuyler and Putnam, major generals, and on the 22d, the day the news from Bunker Hill was received, Pomeroy, Montgomery, Wooster, Heath, Spencer, Thomas, Sullivan and Greene, brigadier generals. Gates had been made adjutant general with the rank of brigadier. On the 23d, Washington commenced his journey of eleven days to Cambridge, where he arrived on the afternoon of Sunday, the 2d of July. On the following day, under the great elm on Cambridge Common, he assumed command of the army. On the 10th he reports to the President of Congress, that having "visited the several posts occupied by our troops and reconnoitered those of the enemy," he finds that the main body of the latter is strongly intrenched on Bunker Hill with their sentry line extended about one hundred and fifty yards beyond the narrow part of Charlestown Neck, and is protected by three floating batteries and a twenty gun ship, besides a battery on Copp's Hill; and that the remainder of their army, except the Light Horse and a few men in Boston, is "deeply intrenched and strongly fortified" on Roxbury Neck, their outposts being advanced about twenty rods south of their lines. The American army, Washington found scattered along a line ten miles in length extending from the Mystic River on the north to Dorchester on the south. Winter and Prospect Hills in the rear of Charlestown Neck had been fortified and the landing places strengthened down to Sewall's farm on the south side of the Charles River, where a strong intrenchment had been thrown up. Strong works had been constructed by General Thomas on Roxbury Hill, "which because of the brokenness of the ground and the great number of rocks made that part secure." Winter Hill was occupied by the New Hampshire troops and a Rhode Island regiment; a part of Putnam's Connecticut men were on Prospect Hill; Cambridge was guarded entirely by Massachusetts troops; the remainder of the Rhode Islanders manned the Works at Sewall's farm; two Connecticut and nine Massachusetts regiments were at Roxbury. The main bodies of the two armies were scarcely a mile apart, and the outposts, both at Boston and Charlestown

Neck, were within earshot of each other. The diary of Samuel Bixby under date of November 26, mentions that "a flag of truce was sent into Boston by Colonel Parsons and one was returned by the enemy."

The proximity of the lines compelled the greatest vigilance on both sides, particularly on the part of the Americans, because of the extent of their lines and the central position of the enemy. Both sides were continually busy in extending and strengthening their Works, but there were frequent skirmishes to relieve the monotony of the siege. On July 8th, a party from General Thomas' camp drove in the advanced guards of the enemy at Boston Neck and burned several houses which they had been occupying some distance outside their lines. On the 10th, three hundred volunteers landed on Long Island in Boston Harbor and carried off all the cattle and a number of prisoners. Two days later, another party burned the hay stacked on the same island for the British cavalry. Still later, all the ripe grain was reaped and brought off from Nantasket. On the 30th, a party from Dorchester attacked and captured the carpenters and a guard of marines sent to rebuild the Boston lighthouse, which had been burned.

On the 4th of August Washington writes to Congress that the army had been divided into three grand divisions,—the right with headquarters at Roxbury, under Ward; the center at Cambridge under Lee; and the left at Winter Hill under Putnam,—each division into two brigades consisting of about six regiments each, those of the right wing under Thomas and Spencer; of the center, under Heath, and of the left wing under Sullivan and Greene. Spencer's brigade was composed of four regiments including his own, Parsons' and Huntington's, and was encamped on Parker's or Great Hill.

From this army, larger than any ever before assembled on the Continent and now fully organized, the people expected great things and daily looked for news of the expulsion or capture of the British. But the army was dangerously weak and compelled to remain inactive from a cause which Washington was obliged to conceal from the public and even from most of his officers—the great scarcity of powder. He was most anxious to make an attack on Boston, but a Council of War

called in September to consider its advisability, unanimously determined that under the circumstances it was not to be hazarded.

In October, Washington writing to Robert Carter Nicholas in Virginia, explains the situation: "The enemy in Boston and on the heights at Charlestown are so strongly fortified as to render it almost impossible to force their lines thrown up at the head of each neck. Without great slaughter on our side, or cowardice on theirs, it is absolutely so. We, therefore, can do no more than keep them besieged, which they are to all intents and purposes as closely as any troops can be, who have an opening to the sea. Our advanced Works and theirs are within musket shot. We daily undergo a cannonade which has done no injury to our Works and very little hurt to our men. These insults we are compelled to submit to for want of powder, being obliged, except now and then giving them a shot, to reserve what we have for closer work than cannon-distance."

While the army around Boston was busy watching the beleaguered foe, King George the Third was endeavoring to negotiate with Catharine of Russia for twenty thousand mercenaries to enable him to put down the rebellion in America, it being openly acknowledged in Parliament that enough British recruits could not be procured on any terms for the purpose. Fortunately for the Colonies, the sagacious Empress, realizing the dishonorable character of the proposition made by the King, rejected it contemptuously, and with keen irony inquired through her Minister, "Could not his Majesty make use of Hanoverians." In the end he was obliged to resort for his auxiliaries to the petty German Principalities whose troops were in the market for a moderate consideration. The Duke of Brunswick sold him four thousand men, and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel about thirteen thousand, one fourth of all the ablebodied men among his subjects.

Early in November preparations were made to raise a new army to serve until January 1, 1777, the period of enlistment of the army of 1775 being about to expire. It was hoped that the old troops would "press to be engaged in the cause of their country," but instead, enlistments were discouragingly slow and few would enlist unless granted a furlough. As Schuyler wrote

of the New England men in the Northern Army, "nothing could surpass their impatience to get to their firesides." The monotony of the siege, unbroken except by an occasional skirmish, the discomforts of the camp, the severe strain of guard duty and the constant intrenching and fortifying had subdued somewhat the enthusiasm of the soldiers, and their longing for home became more intense as the time for discharge drew near. The term of the Connecticut troops expired December 10, but their officers had given assurances that they would remain until January 1, or until the five thousand militia who had been called out for the 10th should arrive to take their places. Notwithstanding such assurances and their orders to remain until the tenth, the majority resolved to leave camp on the first, but by threats and persuasions, and in consequence of the activity of the country people who turned many of them back who had set out for home, the greater number were prevailed upon to stay until December 10, the time for their regular discharge. The people of Connecticut were very indignant at the conduct of their troops, and Governor Trumbull wrote to Washington that he had convened the Legislature and assured him that he might depend "on their zeal and ardor to support the common cause, to furnish our quota and to exert their utmost strength for the defense of the rights of these Colonies."

The action of the Connecticut troops was nevertheless very discouraging to Washington who wrote to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island that he had "no reason to believe that the forces of New Hampshire, Massachusetts or Rhode Island will give stronger proofs of their attachment to the cause when the period arrives that they may claim their dismission." On the 11th, in the same spirit, he wrote to the President of Congress that he expected that all the five thousand militia "will be in this day or to-morrow, when what remains of the Connecticut gentry who have not enlisted will have liberty to go to their firesides." But, as he had predicted to Governor Cooke, the Connecticut troops were not the only ones afflicted with homesickness, for in a letter to Joseph Reed, January 4th, he says: "the same desire of retiring into a chimney corner seized the troops of New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, so soon as their time expired, as had wrought upon those of Connecticut." In

the same letter he further writes: "We are now left with a good deal less than half-raised regiments and about five thousand militia who only stand engaged to the middle of this month; . . . We are told that we shall soon get the army completed, but I have been told so many things which have not come to pass that I distrust everything." There was doubtless abundant reason to complain of the conduct of the New England troops, but would Washington have found his Virginians, under the same circumstances, any less anxious to see their homes?

To add to the general discouragement news came of the utter failure of the expedition into Canada. Montreal had surrendered, but the brave Montgomery had fallen in the assault on Quebec and his army had been repulsed.

By the middle of January the enlistments had reached nearly eleven thousand. In the absence or loss of the rolls for 1776, it is uncertain how many of the soldiers of 1775 re-enlisted, but considering the inducements offered and the spirit of the people at home, probably the greater number returned to the army. In the reorganization, the five Connecticut regiments were assigned, the Tenth to Parsons, the Seventeenth to Huntington, the Nineteenth to Chas. Webb, the Twentieth, Putnam's old regiment, to Benedict Arnold, but later as Arnold never assumed command, to Col. Durkee, and the Twenty-Second to Wyllys. These regiments were all, except the Twentieth, brigade, under Spencer and formed a part of Ward's Division.

On the 16th of January a Council was summoned to consider whether a determined attempt should not be made to capture Boston before the enemy could be reinforced in the spring. It was agreed that the attempt should be made, but that the present force was inadequate, and that to strengthen it the New England Colonies should be requested to call out thirteen thousand militia to serve until April first. This request was promptly complied with. Four days after this it was discovered that General Clinton had sailed out of Boston Harbor with four or five hundred men, but whether his destination was New York, Long Island or the South could not be ascertained. Anticipating some such movement of the enemy, Washington had (Jan. 8th) sent General Lee to Connecticut with orders to collect what

troops he could and proceed to New York for the purpose of putting the city in a proper state of defense.

On the 16th of February, the ice having frozen sufficiently for troops to cross on from Cambridge and Roxbury to Boston, Washington submitted to a Council of War whether an immediate assault should not be made, but he was overruled on the ground that the army was still too weak, and deficient in arms and ammunition, and recommended instead that steps be taken to fortify Dorchester Heights. Preparations were accordingly commenced. On the evening of Monday, March 4, under cover of a heavy bombardment, the Heights were occupied and intrenchments thrown up, the discovery of which the next morning produced the greatest consternation among the enemy. The hurrying of officers and the rapid assembling of troops indicated an intention to attack without delay, but nothing definite was done until evening when Lord Percy embarked with a large force for the Castle from which a landing could be made on Dorchester Neck. A violent storm coming up at the critical moment frustrated his plans and compelled him to return to the city. Before another attempt could be made, the Works had been made so strong that to carry them was hopeless, and yet to hold the city unless they were carried, would be impossible. Perceiving this, a Council of War advised immediate evacuation. To hasten the movements of the enemy, Washington on the night of the 16th, took possession of Nook's Hill which commanded the road over Roxbury Neck into Boston, and there erected a battery. The sight of this new danger caused the British to embark precipitately. Before ten o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 17th of March, the whole army was on board the transports and on their way down the Harbor. As the British moved out, the Americans marched in, the troops in Roxbury over the Neck, those in Cambridge coming over in boats, and occupied the city. The fleet was delayed at Nantasket Roads until the 27th, when the whole got under way and stood out to sea. Thus ingloriously for the British ended the siege of Boston. Never again during the war, except as a prisoner, would a redcoat be seen within the bounds of Massachusetts.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARMY IN NEW YORK. THE HICKEY PLOT. ARRIVAL OF GENERAL HOWE. PARSONS PROMOTED BRIGADIER GENERAL. SENT TO REINFORCE THE BROOKLYN LINES. THE BRITISH PREPARE TO ATTACK.

April—September, 1776

THE destination of the British fleet, unknown at the time of its leaving Nantasket on the 27th, proved to be Halifax in Nova Scotia, to which, as Howe gave out, he went from Boston "for refreshment and that he might have an opportunity to exercise his troops in line." Boston having been relieved, Washington turned his attention to New York. Deeming it of the utmost importance "to prevent the enemy from taking possession of New York and the North River, as they would thereby command the country and the communications with Canada," he had early in January, dispatched General Lee eastward with instructions to get together such volunteers as could be quickly assembled, and "put the city in the best posture of defense which the season and circumstances would admit." By the middle of March about four thousand troops had been collected in New York and arrangements were in progress for moving the whole army there by the way of Norwich, New London and the Sound, as soon as Boston should be evacuated. In anticipation of this event, Hand's Rifle Regiment and three companies of Virginia riflemen had been marched southward on the 14th. On the 18th, the day after the evacuation, Heath with five regiments was ordered to New York. On the 29th, six more were sent under General Sullivan, and Greene with the Third Brigade marched, April first. On the 4th, Spencer left Roxbury with the last brigade, consisting of Parsons', Huntington's, Webb's and Wyllys' regiments, and reached Norwich in time to embark on the return transports which carried Sullivan's brigade to New York. Three of these regiments, his

own, Huntington's and Wyllys', marched under Parsons' immediate command, as appears from the following order:—

3d day of April, 1776.

Marching orders to Colonel Parsons, commanding the 10th, 17th and 22d Regiments of Foot:

You are to proceed with the regiments under your command, to Norwich in Connecticut. In case of extremely bad weather or other unforeseen accident, and you are obliged to halt a day or more between this place and Norwich, you will acquaint Brigadier General Spencer, who is appointed to the command of the brigade now under marching orders, and receive his directions.

His Excellency expects you to preserve good order and discipline upon your march, carefully preventing all pillaging and marauding and other kinds of ill-usage and insult to the inhabitants of the country, as the situation of the enemy and the advanced season of the year, make it of the utmost consequence that not a moment shall be lost that can be properly made use of on your march.

The General, confiding in your zeal, experience and good conduct, is satisfied that no vigilance will be wanting on your part.

On the 4th, Washington himself, accompanied by his suite, left Cambridge. Overtaking Greene's brigade at Providence, its two crack regiments, Hitchcock's and Little's, were "ordered to turn out to escort his Excellency into town, to parade at eight o'clock, both officers and men dressed in uniform, and none to turn out except those dressed in uniform, and those of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers that turn out, to be washed, both face and hands, clean, their beards shaved, their hair combed and powdered, and their arms cleaned. The General wishes to pay the honors to the Commander-in-Chief in as decent and respectable a manner as possible."

The bit of realistic painting for which Greene's minute directions furnish the materials, find its counterpart in the following order issued in January by General Howe to his soldiers in Boston:—

"The commanding officer is surprised to find the necessity of repeating orders that long since ought to have been complied with, as the men in all duties appear in the following manner, viz:—hair not smooth and badly powdered; several without slings to their

firelocks; hats not bound; pouches in a shameful and dirty condition; no frills to their shirts, and their linen very dirty; leggings hanging in a slovenly manner about their knees; some men without uniform stocks and their arms and accouterments by no means so clean as they ought to be. These unsoldierlike neglects must be immediately remedied."

Washington arrived in New York the 13th of April with his military family, but it was not until the 24th that the last of the Boston regiments arrived. Five of them had been left in charge of the defenses; only twenty-one of the twenty-seven Continental regiments were brought on to New York. With the exception of the First Regiment, or the Pennsylvania Riflemen, the whole twenty-seven regiments were from the New England States.

The troops at this time in New York, ten thousand two hundred and thirty-five in number according to the Adjutant General's return of April 28th, were formed into four brigades under Heath, Spencer, Greene and Stirling. Sullivan with six regiments had been sent to the Northern Department. Heath's brigade was posted on the Hudson just above the present Canal Street; Spencer's on the East River near the intersection of Madison and Rutgers Streets; Stirling's on the Bowery and Greene's in Brooklyn. The urgent business of the army at this time was fortifying against the expected attack of the British. In Brooklyn a line of intrenchments was thrown up extending from Wallabout Bay to Gowanus Creek, reinforced by four considerable forts or redoubts. The work in the trenches proved so begriming to the soldiers, and so inadequate was the ordinary allowance of soap to efface the stains of Long Island clay, that Greene, no less careful of the appearance of his troops than when he issued his characteristic order of April 4, besought Washington, as a matter of simple justice to the men to double their supply of soap.

In New York a series of forts were constructed commencing with the Grenadier Battery on the Hudson near Harrison Street, and running around the lower end of the city and up the East River to beyond Corlears Hook. Spencer's Redoubt at the intersection of Monroe and Rutgers Streets and the larger star redoubt between Clinton and Montgomery Streets,

were built by Spencer's brigade, Parsons' regiment doubtless having a share in the construction. Besides the Works along the rivers, numerous batteries and barricades were scattered through the city while a considerable fleet of small vessels was collected to patrol the harbor.

In the latter part of June, what was known as the "Hickey Plot" was discovered. An attempt had been made to enlist several American soldiers belonging to the artillery, to blow up the magazines and spike the cannon, and also one or two of Washington's Life Guards who, upon the first engagement, were to assassinate Washington and the other general officers. "The matter was traced up to Governor Tryon, and Mayor Matthews of the city appears to have been a principal agent between him and the persons concerned in it." Among the soldiers implicated was Thomas Hickey of the Life Guards, who was tried by a court-martial held at Headquarters in New York, June 26, by warrant of General Washington, Colonel Samuel Holden Parsons, president, and twelve other officers comprising the court. The charge was "that being a private sentinel in the commander-in-chief's guard, he was accused of exciting and joining in a mutiny and sedition, and of treacherously corresponding with, enlisting among and receiving pay from, the enemy of the United American Colonies." By the unanimous judgment of the court, Hickey was found guilty The General approved the sentence and ordered that he be hanged on the 28th at eleven o'clock; and "that all the officers and men off duty belonging to General Heath's, Spencer's, Lord Stirling's and General Scott's brigades, be under arms on their respective parades at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, to march from thence to the ground between General Spencer's and Lord Stirling's encampments, to attend the execution of the above sentence. . . . The Provost Marshal immediately to make the necessary preparations, and to attend on that duty to-morrow. . . . Each of the brigade majors to furnish the Provost Marshal with twenty men from each brigade, with good arms and bayonets as a guard on the prisoner to and at the place of execution." The letters of the period describe the excitement and horror produced by the discovery of the plot.

On the 9th of July the army was paraded to hear read the

Declaration of Independence. The day ended with pulling down the equestrian statue of George III. in Bowling Green and sending the lead of which it was made to Litchfield, Connecticut, where the patriotic ladies of that town moulded it into bullets for the use of the American army.

The last of June a fleet of one hundred and thirty sail arrived off Sandy Hook with General Howe and his Boston army and landed on Staten Island. During July the transports and ships of war in the harbor, which brought additional troops, increased to nearly three hundred in number, and a little later to four hundred. On the 1st of August Clinton and Cornwallis arrived unexpectedly from the South, and on the 12th came Howe's last division including Heister's Hessians.

August 9th, Congress, in response to Washington's request for more general officers, appointed Heath, Spencer, Sullivan and Greene, major generals, and James Reed, Nixon, St. Clair, McDougall, Parsons and James Clinton, brigadier generals. The following letter enclosing his commission was received by Parsons from his college mate, John Hancock, President of Congress:

PHILADELPHIA, *Aug. 10, 1776.*

SIR.—The Congress having yesterday been pleased to promote you to the rank of Brigadier General in the Army of the American States, I do myself the pleasure to enclose your commission and wish you happy.

JOHN HANCOCK,

To Saml. Holden Parsons. *Prest.*

General Parsons was assigned to the command of Spencer's old brigade, composed of Huntington's, Wyllys', Durkee's and Tyler's Connecticut regiments and Ward's Massachusetts regiment, about twenty-five hundred in all, and all Continental troops. Spencer's division was made up of Parsons' and Wadsworth's brigades, the latter composed of seven regiments of militia, and was posted along the East River.

While the army was in New York, numerous letters passed between General Parsons and John Adams, his old college friend, then in Congress, relative to the principles which should govern appointments in the army, and to the qualifications of

the applicants for commissions. The two following very characteristic letters have been preserved among the Parsons papers:—

PHILADELPHIA, *June 22d, 1776.*

DEAR SIR.—Your obliging letter of the third of June has been too long unanswered. I acknowledge the difficulty in ascertaining the comparative merits of officers and the danger of advancing friends where there is no uncommon merit. This danger cannot be avoided by any other means than making it an invariable rule to promote officers in succession, for if you make a King the judge of uncommon merit, he will advance favorites without merit under color or pretence of it. If you make a Minister of State the judge, he will naturally promote his relatives, connections and friends.

If you place the power of judging of extraordinary merit in an assembly, you don't mend the matter much, for by all the experience I have had, I find that assemblies have favorites as well as Kings and ministers. The favorites of assemblies and of the leading members, are not always the most worthy. I don't know whether they ever are. The leading members have sons, brothers and cousins, acquaintances, friends and connections of one sort or another, near or remote, and I have ever found these leading members of assemblies as much under the influence of nature and her passions and prejudices as Kings and ministers; at least, the exceptions are few and the difference little. The principle advantage and difference lies in this, that, in an assembly, there are more guards and checks upon the infirmities of leading men than upon Kings and ministers. What then shall we say? Shall we leave it to the general and the army? Is there not as much favoritism, as much nature, passion and prejudice in the army as in an assembly; at Headquarters as in a Court; in a general as in a King or minister?

Upon the whole, I believe it wisest to depart from the line of succession as seldom as possible, but I cannot think that the power of promotion should never deviate from it at all. Though liable to abuses everywhere, yet I assist in the business in the assembly. But in our American Army, as that is circumstanced, it is as difficult to settle a rule of succession as a criterion of merit. We have troops in every Province from Georgia to New Hampshire. A colonel is killed in New Hampshire; the next colonel to him in the American Army is in Georgia. Must we send the colonel from Georgia to command the regiment in New Hampshire? Upon his

journey he is seized with a fever and dies. The next colonel is in Canada. We must then send to Canada for a colonel to go to Portsmouth, and as the colonel next to him is in South Carolina, we must send a colonel from thence to Canada to command that regiment. These marches and countermarches must run through all the corps of officers and will occasion such inextricable perplexities, delays and uncertainties, that we will not hesitate to pronounce it impracticable and ruinous. Shall we say then that succession shall take place among the officers of every distant army, or in every distant department. My own private opinion is that we shall never be quite right until every colony is permitted to raise their own troops and the rule of succession is established among the officers of the colony. This, where there are troops of several colonies serving in the same camp, may be liable to some inconveniences, but these will be fewer than upon any other plan you can adopt. It is right, I believe, to make the rule of promotion among captains and subalterns, regimental only, and that among field officers, more general. But the question is, how general it shall be—shall it extend to the whole American Army or only to the whole district or department, or only to the separate portion of the Army serving at a particular place.

That it is necessary to enlist an army to serve during the war or, at least, for a longer period than one year, and to offer some handsome encouragement for that end, I have been convinced a long time. I would make this temptation to consist partly in money, partly in land, and considerable in both. It has been too long delayed, but I think it will now be soon done. What is the reason that New York must continue to embarrass the continent? Must it be so forever? What is the cause of it? And have they no politicians capable of instructing and forming the sentiments of their people? or are their people incapable of seeing and feeling like other men? One would think that their proximity to New England would assimilate their opinions and principles. One would think too that the Army would have some influence upon them, but it seems to have none. New York is likely to have the honor of being the very last of all in imbibing the general principles and the true system of American policy. Perhaps she will never entertain them at all.

I am with much respect,
Your friend and servant,
JOHN ADAMS.

P. S.—Since the above was written, a bounty of ten dollars for three years is voted. I am ashamed of it, but cannot help it.

PHILADELPHIA, *August 19, 1776.*

DEAR SIR.—Your favors of the 13th and 15th are before me. The gentlemen you recommend for Majors, Chapman and Dyer, will be recommended by the Board of War and I hope agreed to in Congress. I thank you for your observations upon certain field officers. Patterson, Shepherd and Brooks make the best figure, I think, upon paper. It is my misfortune that I have not the least acquaintance with any of these gentlemen, having never seen any one of them or heard his name till lately. This is a little remarkable. Few persons in the Province ever traveled over it, the whole of it, more than I have, or had better opportunities to know every conspicuous character. But I don't so much as know from what parts of the Province Shepherd and Brooks come, of what families they are, their education or employments. I should be very glad to be informed. Lt. Col. Henshaw has been recommended to me by Col. Reed for promotion as a useful officer. But upon the whole, I think the list you have given me don't shine. I am much ashamed of it. I am so vexed sometimes as almost to resolve to make interest to be a colonel myself. I have almost vanity enough to think that I could make a figure in such a group. But a treacherous, shattered constitution is an eternal objection against my aspiring at military command. If it was not for this insuperable difficulty, I should certainly imitate old Nol Cromwell in one particular, that is in launching into military life after forty, as much as I dislike his character and example in others. I wish I could find materials anywhere in sufficient quantities to make good officers. A brave and able man, wherever he is, shall never want my vote for his advancement, nor shall an ignorant, awkward dastard ever want it for his dismission. Congress must assume a higher tone of discipline over officers, as well as those, over their men. With regard to encouragements in money and lands for soldiers to enlist during the war, I have ever been in favor of it as the best economy and the best policy, and I have no doubt that rewards in land will be given after the war is over, but the majority are not of my mind for promising it now. I am the less anxious about it, however, for a reason which does not seem to have much weight with the majority, although it may cost us more and we may put now and then a battle to a hazard by the method we are in, yet we shall be less in danger of corruption and violence from a standing army, and our militia will acquire courage, experience, discipline and hardiness in actual service. I wish every man upon the continent were a soldier and obliged upon occasion to fight, and determined to conquer or die. Flight was unknown to the Romans;

I wish it was to Americans. There was a flight from Quebec and worse than a flight from the Cedars. If we don't atone for this disgrace, we are undone. A more exalted love of country, a more enthusiastic ardor for military glory and a deeper detestation, disdain and horror of martial disgrace, must be excited among our people, or we shall perish in infamy. I will certainly give my voice for devoting to the infernal gods every man, high or low, who shall be convicted of bashfulness in the day of battle.

I am affectionately yours,

JOHN ADAMS.

To General Parsons.

P. S.—Since the above was written, Congress has accepted the report of the Board of War and appointed Dyer and Chapman Majors. I had much pleasure in promoting Dyer, not only from his own excellent character, but from respect to my good friend, his father.

Both Dyer and Chapman were Majors in Parsons' brigade.

August 4, 1776, Adams wrote to General Greene on the same subject, as follows:—

A general officer ought to be a gentleman of letters and general knowledge, a man of address and knowledge of the world. He should carry with him authority and command. There are among the New England officers gentlemen who are equal to all this; Parsons, Hitchcock, Varnum and others younger than they and inferior to them too in command; but these are a great ways down in the list of colonels, and to promote them over the heads of so many veterans, would throw all into confusion. . . . Name me a New England colonel of whose real qualifications I can speak with confidence, who is entitled to promotion by succession, and if I do not get him made a general officer, I will join the New England colonels in their jealousy and outclamor the loudest of them.

Greene, in his own letter to Adams, to which this is a reply, referring to the arrival of the Howes and the large force under their command, makes this somewhat extraordinary remark:—"I wrote you some time past, I thought you were playing a desperate game. I think so still." The next year he continued to write in the same tone and repeated that "the game was desperate, though this would make no difference in his resolution to see it out."

On the 27th of August, the British Army numbered about thirty-one thousand men, of whom twenty-four thousand were effectives. This Army included nearly every one of England's veteran regiments, besides about eight thousand Hessians, and was perfectly equipped and ably officered. Washington's Army aggregated about twenty-eight thousand five hundred officers and men, between eight and nine thousand of whom were unfit or unavailable for duty, thus leaving but about nineteen thousand effectives, most of whom were raw troops, poorly armed and equipped, and commanded very largely by inexperienced officers. The sick were very numerous. Heath writes under date of August 8, that they then amounted to nearly ten thousand; and Parsons, on the 4th, writes to Colonel Little:—"My doctor and mate are sick. I have nearly two hundred men sick in camp; my neighbors are in very little better state."

It was well understood that Howe was nearly ready to attack, but at what point was wholly uncertain until the morning of the 22d, when fifteen thousand of his troops were landed on Long Island. So soon as the landing was accomplished, Cornwallis occupied Flatbush with the Reserves, the main body encamping on the plains between Flatbush and the Narrows.

Fearing an immediate attack, Washington the same day reinforced the Brooklyn lines with six regiments. On the 24th, he sent over three regiments from Parsons' brigade—Huntington's, Wyllys' and Tyler's—and on the next day the two remaining regiments, Durkee's and Ward's. Brigadier Lord Stirling crossed the same day, half his brigade having preceded him. Unfortunately, General Greene was at this time stricken with the prevailing fever, and, being seriously ill, General Sullivan, who had recently returned from Canada, was ordered to take command on Long Island. On the 24th, he was superseded by Putnam, his senior officer, but nevertheless remained in an active, though subordinate command. By General Putnam's order of the 25th, a provisional arrangement of the troops then on the Island was made, under which the regiments of Huntington, Wyllys, Tyler, Silliman, Chester, Gay and Ward were placed under the command of General Parsons. Pursuant to Washington's instructions, a brigadier of the day

was to be detailed, "who should remain constantly upon the lines that he may be upon the spot to take command and see that orders are duly executed." General Nixon was assigned to this duty for the 24th; General Lord Stirling for the 25th and General Parsons for the 26th, so that it was his fortune to open the battle of Long Island.

During the whole of the 26th, Washington was on the Island with Putnam, Sullivan and other officers, visiting the outposts and reconnoitering the position of the enemy, but nothing was observed indicating the storm which broke so suddenly and disastrously on the morrow.

CHAPTER VII

The Battle of Long Island. Retreat to New York.

August, 1776

A ridge of broken hills from forty to eighty feet in height, extending from the Narrows easterly through the center of Long Island towards the village of Jamaica, separated the plain on which the British Army was encamped from the Brooklyn lines. This ridge was covered with a dense forest and presented an impassable barrier to artillery except at four passes or natural depressions in the hills, through which roads had been constructed. The Flatbush Pass near the main entrance to Prospect Park, a mile and a half from the Brooklyn lines, was crossed by the main road leading from Flatbush to the Brooklyn, now Fulton, Ferry. The Jamaica Pass, about four miles easterly from the lines, was crossed by the road from Jamaica, which, running through the village of Bedford, connected with the Ferry road about a mile towards the Ferry from the Flatbush Pass. A short distance from the intersection of these two roads, the Gowanus Road branched southerly, running south of the Gowanus Creek to the village and bay of that name, and thence by the Red Lion tavern to the Narrows. From the tavern the Martense Lane led through a gorge on the south side of the present Greenwood Cemetery and connected with the roads south of the ridge. A road from Bedford to Flatbush ran through the Bedford Pass. South of the ridge several roads crossed the plain connecting Flatlands with the Jamaica Road east of the Jamaica Pass.

On the 26th, additional troops were sent over from New York, raising the total force of the Americans on the Island to about seven thousand effective men. Of these, three regiments and a battery held the Flatbush Pass; Wyllys' and Chester's regiments of Parsons' brigade held the Bedford Pass;

Stirling with his Marylanders guarded the coast road; Colonel Miles looked after the Jamaica Road and a detail of five mounted officers patrolled the entrance to the Jamaica Pass. The remainder of the force, about forty-two hundred men, were posted along the Brooklyn lines.

On the 25th, De Heister, with two Hessian brigades, crossed from Staten Island, increasing Howe's army on Long Island to twenty-one thousand men, three times the effective force of the Americans. On the evening of the 26th, silently and secretly commenced the well-planned movement intended to overwhelm Washington and his army. A flanking column of ten thousand men under Clinton, Cornwallis, Percy and Howe, was to gain the Jamaica Pass by a circuitous route of nine miles over the cross roads from Flatlands, and, advancing by the Jamaica and Gowanus Roads, interpose itself between the American outposts and the Brooklyn lines, thus cutting off their retreat. While this movement was in progress, De Heister was to engage the attention of the guard at the Flatbush Pass, and Grant, advancing from the Narrows along the coast road with seven thousand men, was to hold the guard at this point by a feint of attacking until the movement on their right should have sufficiently developed, when he was to attack in earnest.

The first collision took place on the Narrows Road at about two o'clock in the morning, when Grant's vanguard struck the American pickets, who fell back after an exchange of fire without checking the enemy. A report of this was taken by some of the guard "at the first dawn of day" to General Parsons, who, as the brigadier on duty, commanded the outposts, and also to General Putnam at his Quarters in the lines. Parsons immediately rode to the spot and "found by fair daylight that the enemy were through the woods and descending the hill on the north side, upon which with twenty of his fugitive guard, all he could collect, he took post on a height in their front at about half a mile's distance, which halted their column and gave time to Lord Stirling with his forces to come up." In front of the British was a low, marshy piece of ground, on the opposite side of which was a considerable elevation over which Stirling formed his line of battle, his right

resting on the bay road and his left on the woods in Greenwood Cemetery. Grant, seeing this, disposed his forces as if about to attack. Finding that the British were overlapping his left, Stirling directed Parsons to take Atlee's regiment and Huntington's of his own brigade, both of which Parsons had sent forward, and extend his line still further into the woods. Here for the first time was an American and British line of battle opposed in the open field, but Stirling had only sixteen hundred men with which to withstand the seven thousand of Grant. It was now seven o'clock, but the flanking movement was still in progress, so that the time had not yet arrived for Grant to attack in force. Stirling, however, was not aware of this and kept up a brisk skirmishing all along the line for two hours.

As Parsons' two regiments moved to the left, "a hill of clear ground" was seen at a little distance well situated for watching the enemy. Nearing the hill, the British were seen also marching to seize it. Observing this, Parsons hurried Atlee forward, but the enemy arriving first poured a volley into his ranks which caused his men to waver for a moment, but rallying them quickly and leading the advance, with orders "to reserve their fire and aim aright," he pushed forward with so much resolution and with such well-directed fire, that the enemy fell back leaving twelve killed and a lieutenant and four privates wounded. Parsons' whole force now occupied the hill and awaited the further movements of the British. In half an hour the enemy formed for another attack, but again Atlee's and Huntington's men opened on them, and for a second time compelled them to retreat with the loss of Lieut. Colonel Grant of the 40th Regiment, whose fall gave rise to the report that the Division Commander himself had been killed. By this time Parsons' men had exhausted their ammunition, but fortunately Huntington's ammunition wagon coming on to the field just then, they were able to refill their cartridge boxes against a third attack which was threatened with the assistance of the 42d Highlanders. But the enemy remained quiet, and Parsons and his men continued in possession of the hill.

The flanking column reached Bedford at about half after eight in the morning, having captured on the way the patrol at the Jamaica Pass and thus prevented early notice of the

movement to the Americans. Miles, marching through the woods, unexpectedly ran into the British column on the Jamaica Road and was taken with many of his men, but half his regiment made good its escape. Wyllys and Chester at the Bedford Pass, discovering the enemy at Bedford in their rear, promptly retreated and reached the lines with little loss. While the enemy was at Bedford, Sullivan, ignorant of the fact, went from the lines "to the hill near Flatbush to reconnoiter the enemy," and with four hundred of the picket guard was caught between the flanking column and the advancing Hessians, but Henshaw and Cornell escaping the trap, brought in their regiments in safety and good order.

The day had been lost on the American left and center and Cornwallis was now marching down the Gowanus Road to crush Stirling between his brigades and Grant's. Seeing his danger, Stirling ordered his men to make their way the best they could across the Gowanus Creek and marsh, while to protect their retreat he vigorously attacked the British with half his Marylanders, nearly all of whom with himself were taken prisoners in their effort to save the rest of the command. When Stirling fell back from Grant's front in order to attack Cornwallis, he failed to send notice of the movement to Parsons whom he had "ordered to maintain his ground till receipt of his orders to retreat." Hearing the heavy firing in his rear and receiving no orders to retreat and "finding the enemy by rallying to increase on his hands, Parsons flew to the place where Lord Stirling was posted, leaving his party on the ground with strict orders to maintain it till his return, but found his Lordship and his whole body of troops gone." Pushed in front by Grant, his retreat along the road or across the marsh cut off by Cornwallis, "he had no alternative left but to force his way through one line into a thick wood which he effected with part of his men," not over three hundred in number, who soon broke up into small parties and tried to escape through the woods, but were nearly all taken. Atlee with twenty-three men avoided capture until late in the afternoon, while Parsons, more fortunate, was able to conceal himself in a marsh whence with seven men he escaped to our lines the next morning. The hill in Greenwood Cemetery which Parsons is supposed to have seized and held

against the British, is now known as "Battle Hill" and is marked by a soldiers' monument. Some of the hardest fighting of the day was on this spot, and the enemy suffered more severely here than at any other one point in the whole range of five miles over which the battle was fought. In Parsons' front were counted upwards of sixty of the enemy's dead, and "the four regiments alone which at different times encountered Parsons, the 17th, 23d, 42d and 44th, lost in the aggregate eighty-six officers and men killed and wounded."

The total American loss in the battle, according to the best authorities, did not exceed one thousand, of whom not over two hundred and fifty were killed or wounded, being one hundred less than the casualties of the enemy whose total loss was about the same as ours.

The two following letters describing the battle were written by General Parsons to his college friend, John Adams, then a delegate in Congress, the originals of which in 1878 were in possession of Charles Francis Adams and are included in the documents accompanying Johnston's "Campaign around New York:"

LONG ISLAND, *29th Aug., 1776.*

DEAR SIR.— . . . Before this reaches you the account of the battle of Tuesday last will arrive—'tis impossible to be particular in a narrative of the matter as many are yet missing, who we may hope to come in. In the night of the 26th, nine regiments of the English troops, perhaps about 2,500, with Field artillery, &c., passed the Western road near the Narrows from the flat land, for our lines. We had a guard of 400 or 500 men posted in the wood, who about three o'clock Tuesday morning gave notice of the enemy's approach, a body of about 1,500 men. We immediately marched down to oppose the progress of the enemy. We took possession of a hill about two miles from camp and detached Col. Atlee with a Reg't. of Delaware to meet them further on the road; in about 60 rods he drew up & received the enemy's fire & gave them a well directed fire from his Reg't., which did great execution & then retreated to the hill; from thence I was ordered with Col. Atlee & part of his Reg't. & Lt. Col. Clark with Col. Huntington's Reg't. to cover the left flank of our main body.

This we executed though our number did at no time exceed 300 men & were attacked three several times by two Regiments, the 44th

& 23d, and repulsed them in every attack with considerable loss. The number of dead we had collected together & the heap the enemy had made we supposed amounted to about 60. We had 12 or 14 wounded prisoners who we caused to be dress'd & their wounds put in the best state our situation would admit. About 10 o'clock we found a large body of the enemy had advanced on the other roads near our lines, but a constant fire was kept up on the enemy till about 12, when we found them fast advancing on our rear to cut off our retreat. Our little main body advanced boldly up to the enemy in the rear & broke through their lines and secured the retreat of most of the party; but it fared still harder with my little party who had three times repulsed the enemy in front and once in the rear; we had no notice of the retreat of the main body till it was too late for us to join them, the enemy having cut off our retreat on three sides & the main body having broke through the enemy's lines on the other side and left them between us. We had no alternative left but force through one line into a thick wood, which we attempted & effected with part of our men, the other part with Col. Clark being before sent into the wood. When we had made our way into the wood, I was accidentally parted from Col. Atlee & most of the men, whom I have never seen since. I came in with 7 men, yesterday morning much fatigued. Our loss is impossible to be ascertained. In my party a Lt. Col. Parry was killed and one wounded. Our loss in killed and wounded is inconsiderable, but many are missing, among whom are General Sullivan and Lord Stirling, Colonels Miles, Atlee, Johnson, Lt. Col. Clark, Maj. Wells & several other officers of distinction are yet missing. I think the trial of that day far from being any discouragement, but in general our soldiers behaved with firmness.

I am sir, with esteem and regard
Yr. Humble Svt.

To John Adams in Congress. SAM'L. H. PARSONS.

MORRISANIA, *Oct. 8, 1776.*

DEAR SIR.—Your's of the 2d inst. I rec'd last night, for which I am obliged to you. If any information I can give will contribute to your satisfaction or my country's good I am happy in furnishing what falls under my observation. I agree fully with you that you were in the dark as to some facts relative to the transactions on Long Island, & am fully satisfied that you still remain so, or you would not suppose the surprise there was in the daytime. To give you a clear idea of the matter, I must trouble you with a description of that part of the country where the enemy landed and en-

camped and the intervening lands between that and our lines. From the point of land which forms the east side of the Narrows, runs a ridge of hills about N. E. in length about 5 or 6 miles, covered with a thick wood which terminates in a small rising land near Jamaica; through these hills are three passes only, one near the Narrows, one on the road called the Flatbush road & one called the Bedford road, being a cross road from Bedford to Flatbush which lies on the southerly side of these hills; these passes are, through the mountains or hills, easily defensible, being very narrow and the lands high and mountainous on each side. These are the only roads which can be passed from the south side the hill to our lines, except a road leading around the easterly end of the hills to Jamaica. On each of these roads were placed a guard of 800 men, and east of them in the wood was placed Col Miles with his Battalion to watch the motion of the enemy on that part, with orders to keep a party constantly reconnoitering to and across the Jamaica road. The sentinels were so placed as to keep a constant communication between the three guards on the three roads. South of these hills lies a large plain extending from the North River easterly to Rockaway Bay perhaps 5 miles & southerly to the sound bounded on the south by the sound and on the north by the hills. Those hills were from two to three miles and a half from our lines. The enemy landed on this plain & extended their camp from the River to Flatbush, perhaps 3 or 4 miles. On the day of the surprise I was on duty, and at the first dawn of day the guards from the West road near the Narrows, came to my quarters & informed me the enemy were advancing in great numbers by that road. I soon found it true & that the whole guard had fled without firing a gun; these (by way of retaliation I must tell you) were all New Yorkers & Pennsylvanians; I found by fair daylight the enemy were through the wood & descending the hill on the North side, on which with 20 of my fugitive guard being all I could collect, I took post on a height in their front at about half a mile's distance, which halted their column & gave time for Lord Stirling with his forces to come up; thus much for the West road. On the east next Jamaica, Col. Miles suffered the enemy to march not less than 6 miles till they came near two miles in the rear of the guards before he discovered and gave notice of their approach. This also was in the night & the guard kept by the Pennsylvanians altogether—the New England and New Jersey troops being in the other two roads through which the enemy did not attempt to pass.

We were surprised—our principal barrier lost by that surprise, but as far as the cover of the night is an excuse we have it. The

landing of the troops could not be prevented at the distance of 6 or 7 miles from our lines; on a plain under the cannon of the ships, just in with the shore. Our unequal numbers would not admit attacking them on the plain when landed.

When our principal barrier was lost, our numbers so much inferior to the enemy, they not disposed to storm our lines, but set down to make regular approaches to us—were part of the reasons which induced a retreat from thence and a consequent abandoning of New York. Our sentinels and guards in my opinion were well posted, they might have been better, too great security I thought prevailing with some leading officers, but I am still of the opinion, if our guards on the West road & Col. Miles on East end of the hills had done their duty, the enemy would not have passed those important heights, without such very great loss as would have obliged them to abandon any further enterprise on the Island.

I am sir

Your Most Humble Sv't.

To John Adams in Congress. SAM'L H. PARSONS.

To secure the Works from assault, Washington on the afternoon of the 27th, had increased the force on his lines to nine thousand men. Skirmishes were frequent enough and with variable success, but Howe showed no disposition to take the Works by storm. The Bunker Hill lesson was too fresh in his mind. Instead, he commenced regular approaches, and on the morning of the 29th completed his first parallel. This forced the alternative upon the Americans of either driving the enemy from their Works or retreating to New York. As defeat must prove disastrous, and, under the unequal conditions, almost certain, the enemy being two to one and the advantage of fighting in trenches being equal to but three to one, and as the fleet was waiting only for a favorable wind to run up the East River and cut off all communications with New York, the only safety for the army was plainly in an immediate withdrawal.

Late in the day of the 29th a Council of War was held at the house of Philip Livingston near the corner of Hicks and Joralemon streets, at which were present, General Washington, Major Generals Putnam and Spencer, and Brigadier Generals Mifflin, McDougall, Parsons, Scott, Wadsworth and Fellows. After much discussion, the Council, "convinced by unanswerable reasons," unanimously decided upon an immediate retreat.

Boats had already been collected. Each regiment was ordered to parade at seven o'clock, and, as soon as it was dark, the embarkation commenced from the Brooklyn Ferry in the midst of a pouring rain. Mifflin and the rear guard did not get off until about sunrise, but a dense sea-fog rolling in at early dawn enabled them to move without attracting the attention of the enemy. Before seven o'clock the entire force had crossed safely to New York, having effected one of the most masterly retreats on record.

CHAPTER VIII.

Bushnell's Torpedo. Kip's Bay Affair. Retreat from New York. Battle of Harlem Heights.

September, 1776

"Upon the rebels abandoning their lines at Brooklyn," writes Sir William Howe to Lord Germain describing the disposition of his troops after the battle of Long Island, "the King's army moved from Bedford, leaving Lieut. General Heister encamped upon the Heights of Brooklyn with two brigades of Hessians, and one brigade of British at Bedford, and took five positions in the neighborhood of Newtown, Bushwick, Hell Gate and Flushing. The two islands of Montressor and Buchanan (now Randall's and Ward's) were occupied and batteries raised against the enemy's Work at Horn's Hook, commanding the passage of Hell Gate." Had boats been at hand to transfer these troops to Pell's Point, for which they were conveniently posted, Howe might have anticipated his October flank movement and maneuvered Washington out of New York with little loss.

In the reorganization of the army which followed the retreat from Long Island, Parsons' brigade of Continentals, to which Prescott's Massachusetts men, who up to this time had garrisoned Governor's Island, had been transferred, was assigned to the First Division under Putnam and stationed at Corlears Hook. The particular duty of this Division, which besides Parsons' brigade included those of Scott, James Clinton, Fellows and Silliman, was to guard the East River up as far as Fifteenth Street. The Second Division of six brigades under Spencer, continued the line to Horn's Hook and Harlem. The Third Division, composed of Mifflin's and George Clinton's brigades, under Heath, was stationed at Kingsbridge. About five thousand men were left in the city, the main body of the army being concentrated around and above Harlem.

While the army was yet in New York an interesting incident occurred, very disturbing to the British. David Bushnell of Saybrook, a student at Yale (1771-1775), who is regarded by the best judges as the originator of submarine warfare, had while in college perfected a torpedo boat with which he proposed to blow up the British fleet in New York Harbor. In the summer of 1776, he came to New York with his invention to try it on the "Asia" man-of-war, but his brother, who was to work the boat, falling sick, he applied to General Parsons for someone who would be willing to learn the "ways and mystery of the new machine and make a trial of it." Parsons sent for his brother-in-law, Sergeant Ezra Lee of the 10th Connecticut, and two others, volunteers for service in a fireship when wanted, to undertake the enterprise. They consented to try the machine, and, after experimenting with it up the Sound until familiar with its "mysteries," towed it down to New Rochelle and carried it overland from there to the Hudson, the East River at that time being in possession of the enemy. September 5, 1776, General Parsons wrote to General Heath in command at Kingsbridge:

SIR.—As the machine designed to attempt blowing up the enemy's ships is to be transferred from the East to the North River, where a small vessel will be wanted to receive it, I wish you would order one for the purpose. As all things are now ready to make the experiment, I wish it may not be delayed. Though the event is uncertain, the experiment under our present circumstances is certainly worth trying.

I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

SAM'L H. PARSONS.

To Maj. General Heath at Kingsbridge.

This machine, which is described as turtle shaped and not more than seven feet long, was strongly built of oak, the sides, six inches thick, well caulked and pitched, with sufficient space inside for one person to sit or stand and navigate it. The man-hole in the top was closed by a brass door in which were bull's-eyes to admit light. The boat was submerged by letting in water and brought to the surface by pumping it out, or, if the pumps became choked, by letting go part of the

ballast. The boat was steered by a rudder with a curved tiller which entered through a water joint, and was driven, or rather drawn, through the water by a rude sort of propeller made by crossing at right angles two pieces of wood four inches wide and twelve inches long with beveled sides, like the arms of a windmill. This was fastened to a shaft piercing the bow instead of the stern of the boat, and revolved by means of a crank. By hard labor, it was possible with this apparatus to make three knots an hour for a short time. This seems to have been the earliest application of the screw to the propulsion of vessels on record.

The magazine containing the powder was egg-shaped and made of two oak blocks hollowed out and bound with hoops. Within it were clockworks which could be set to spring a gun-lock at any fixed time after starting the clock, when an explosion would follow. This contrivance was attached to the stern of the boat and could be disengaged by turning a screw. A sharp-pointed screw, to which the magazine had been made fast by a few feet of line, projected vertically from the top of the boat. In attacking a ship, the first thing to be done was to drive this screw firmly into the ship's bottom, when, by turning the setscrews which held it in place, it would be detached from the boat and left in the ship as a fastening for the line to which the magazine was tied, so that the magazine, after being released from the boat, could not float off beyond the length of the line and must at all times remain in close contact with the ship's bottom. The moment the magazine was cast off from the boat, the clockworks started, and the navigator, to escape the explosion, had to pull away with all speed from the ship.

On the night chosen for the attempt, the machine was towed by whale boats as near the "Asia" as it was prudent to go and then cast off. Running under the stern of the ship, Lee could see the men on deck and hear them talk. Closing the brass door in the dome of his craft, he sank so as to come up under the ship. Here he worked for two hours endeavoring to fasten the screw into the ship's bottom, but the buoyancy of the boat was not sufficient to furnish the resistance necessary to enable him to penetrate the copper sheathing. Finding that he could not succeed and that daylight was approaching when the boats

of the fleet would be rowing in all directions, he "thought the best generalship was to retreat," as he had four miles to go before passing Governor's Island. When abreast the Island, he was observed from the parapet of the Fort, and a twelve oared barge put out after him. "When it had got within fifty or sixty yards," writes the plucky navigator, "I let loose the magazine in hopes that if they should take me, they would also pick up the magazine and that we should all be blown up together; but as a kind Providence would have it, they took fright and returned to the Island to my infinite joy. I then weathered the Island and our people seeing me, came off in a whale boat and towed me in. The magazine, after getting a little past the Island, went off with a tremendous explosion." According to one, perhaps somewhat exaggerated account, "the enemy's ships took the alarm, cut their cables and proceeded to the Hook with all possible dispatch, sweeping their bottoms with chains and with difficulty preventing their affrighted crews from jumping overboard."

Washington was much interested in the experiment and, with other officers in the secret, is said to have watched it from a roof in lower Broadway. The evacuation of New York prevented further experiments in the harbor, but a frigate anchoring off Bloomingdale soon after, Lee attempted to get under it with his machine, but being discovered was obliged to desist. Had Lee succeeded in blowing up the "Asia" man-of-war, this novel method of warfare would have created such a panic in the fleet, that his Majesty's frigates would never have anchored in Kip's Bay, and the affair of September 15th and the battle of Harlem Heights would never have occurred.

The retreat from Long Island had left the army badly demoralized. The confidence of the troops in their officers and in themselves had been severely shaken, and the situation in New York was by no means reassuring. They had apparently escaped from one trap only to fall into another. The enemy's fleet controlled the rivers and flight in that direction was impossible. A strong force once landed in their rear, either from the North or East River, they would be effectually penned in on the Island and obliged to fight on the enemy's terms or surrender at discretion. The acknowledged untenableness of

the city and the hurrying of the evacuation, added to the general uneasiness. So shaky was the morale of the soldiers retained in the city that any sudden attack was almost certain to create a panic and a rush for a place of safety.

Washington had hoped to hold the city until he found that his troops could not be depended on. Convinced that evacuation was inevitable, in a letter to Congress, September 2d, he submitted this question: "If we should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter quarters for the enemy?" On the 5th, Greene wrote giving it as his opinion, that a general and speedy retreat was absolutely necessary and that the city and its suburbs should be burned. John Jay, although a New Yorker, had already urged its destruction. But Congress sent back the answer "that no damage should be done the city, it being only a question of time when its possession would be recovered."

The measure proposed was heroic; had it been carried into effect, it might have proved as disastrous to Howe's Army as the burning of Moscow did to Napoleon's. A Council of War, held on the 7th, reluctant to abandon the city and influenced by the supposed wish of Congress, voted to retain five thousand troops in the city and post nine thousand at Kingsbridge. Not satisfied with the conclusions of the Council and sensible of the danger of attempting to hold the city, Major General Greene and Brigadiers Mifflin, Nixon, Beale, Parsons, Wadsworth and Scott asked for a second Council, which voted on the 12th to evacuate the city immediately and retire to Harlem Heights, a decision arrived at not a moment too soon. The removal of the baggage and stores, which had been in progress for several days, would have been completed on the 15th, by which time everything would have been in readiness to abandon the city. On the evening of the 14th, Washington, believing that Harlem would be the point of attack, removed his Headquarters to Colonel Morris' house on the Heights at One Hundred and Sixty-first Street, now famous as the Jumel Mansion. A more commanding position he could not have chosen, for with the whole course of the Harlem, the Plains, the East River and the hills of Long Island in full view, it was possible to observe almost every considerable movement of the enemy

towards his left and flank. But it was a strange caprice of fortune that this old Colonial dwelling (built in 1758) which Washington made his Headquarters, should have been the wedding present of Mary Philipse, his early love; and that its great oval dining-room, where she had so often with her loyalist friends drank to the health of King George and the confusion of his enemies, should have become the Council Chamber of her rebel lover and his generals.

The Bowery and its continuation, the Post or Kingsbridge Road, which ran along the lines of Fourth and Lexington Avenues through McGowan's Pass to Kingsbridge, was the main road leading from the city to the upper end of the Island. At Madison Square, the Bloomingdale Road, the present Broadway, branched to the left and ended on Harlem Heights not far from the Hudson. These two roads were connected by a cross road very nearly on the line of Forty-second Street. A line of fortifications extended along the East River from Grand to Thirty-fourth Street, which were held, those at Thirty-fourth Street by Douglas' brigade; at Twenty-third Street, by Wadsworth's; at Twelfth Street, by Scott's and at Grand Street by Parsons'. All these brigades except Parsons' were composed of militia. There was also a formidable battery at Horn's Hook opposite Hell Gate, held by Chester's and Sargent's brigades, and connected by a chain of sentinels with the Works below, which caused Howe to land further down the river, instead of at Harlem as he had intended.

On the early morning of Sunday, September 15th, two forty-gun ships and three frigates sailed up from Wallabout Bay and anchored in Kip's Bay somewhat to the left of Douglas' position and within musket shot of the shore, the design being to turn the flank of the fortified line. Some four thousand British and Hessians under Clinton and Cornwallis, were in the meanwhile embarked in eighty-four boats in Newtown Creek. "As soon as it was finally light," writes Martin of Douglas' brigade, "we saw their boats coming out of a creek on the Long Island side of the water filled with British soldiers. When they came to the edge of the tide, they formed their boats in line and continued to augment their forces until they appeared

like a large clover field in full bloom." At about eleven o'clock in the morning, the ships suddenly opened on Douglas with seventy or eighty guns. The crash was terrific. Martin "made a frog's leap for the ditch and laid there as still as he possibly could." At the same time the boats pushed off and, "getting under cover of the smoke, struck to the left of Douglas' line in order to cut off his retreat," and made the landing without opposition. The frightened militiamen had "kept the lines until they were almost leveled upon them," when seeing the British gain the shore, they commenced breaking on the left and soon were all fleeing in the greatest confusion, panic stricken at the thought of being intercepted. As Martin writes, "the demons of fear and disorder seemed to take possession of all and every thing that day." But better troops would not have endured the concentrated fire of eighty guns at close quarters any more patiently than did these Connecticut farmers.

Leslie's Light Infantry landing first, pushed on after Douglas' men who were fleeing helter-skelter up the Post Road, which they occupied in force at its junction with Forty-second Street. Next came Donop's Hessians, who, marching to the left towards Madison Square, intercepted on the way three or four hundred of Wadsworth's brigade; but Scott, who at Twelfth Street was in plain sight of the landing, retreated earlier and escaped by the Bloomingdale Road. Sir Henry Clinton, landing last with the Grenadiers, marched directly up Thirty-fourth Street on to that part of Murray Hill now represented by Park Avenue, where he halted until four o'clock in the afternoon for the remainder of the army to cross. It was while waiting here that Mrs. Murray entertained General Howe and his officers for two hours or more at her house on the corner of Thirty-sixth Street and Park Avenue, and by thus delaying the march of the British enabled Putnam to safely draw off the remainder of his Division from the lower part of the city.

After it became certain that the enemy would land at Kip's Bay, General Parsons directed three of his regiments, Prescott's, Tyler's and the remnant of Huntington's, less than one thousand men in all (his other regiments being, one at

Powle's Hook and the remaining two on Harlem Heights), to march from his lines near Corlears Hook to assist Spencer's division where the enemy were attempting to land, a distance of about four miles by the road. Fellows' brigade of Massachusetts militia had already been ordered forward for the same purpose. Riding after these regiments by Putnam's order, he observed that the vanguard had turned into the Bloomingdale Road, instead of advancing by the Post Road which led more directly to the landing place, and hastened to the front of the brigade to march it into the Post Road, which would have brought him into immediate collision with Donop's Hessians, but was told that Generals Putnam and Spencer, who were a little distance forward, had ordered the march by this route. Continuing up this road to the road which crossed from the Bloomingdale to the Post Road on the line of Forty-second Street, he "found Fellows' brigade in the cross-road marching eastward, and also saw General Washington, Putnam and others on the top of the hill eastward (Murray Hill), and rode up to them." Washington, who had come down from his Quarters on the Heights immediately upon hearing the firing, in person directed Parsons to "attend to keep his brigade in order and march on into the cross-road. He accordingly rode back and meeting the brigade as it swung into the cross-road, rode by its side to near the top of the hill, his attention being to keep the brigade in order." Fellows' brigade was a considerable distance in advance of Parsons' on the cross-road, and had already or was just about taking position near the Post Road which there ran along the line of Lexington Avenue. The place was not unfavorable for making a stand. On the south side of the cross-road was a large cornfield—the corn full-grown—extending from near Park Avenue to the Post Road, well fitted to cover the movements of troops; and the stone fences and walls which bounded and divided the fields were far better breastworks than the rail fence which did such service at Bunker Hill.

It was now not far from twelve o'clock. The enemy had just effected a landing and the brigades of Douglas and Wadsworth were in full retreat, as Douglas said, "through as hot a fire as could well be made, but they mostly overshot us." As

Parsons with his brigade approached the top of the hill, the panic-stricken militia, breathless and exhausted, could be seen fleeing up the Post Road, into the cross-road and through the fields, and Fellows' brigade, disordered by the fugitives and infected by the prevailing panic, ready to break and run the moment the enemy should appear. Perceiving the situation, Washington and Putnam rode towards the Post Road and attempted to "rally the men and get them into some order," but the appearance just then of Leslie's advance increased the confusion. Parsons coming up at that moment with his brigade, "heard Washington call out, 'Take the walls,' and immediately added, 'Take the cornfield,' at which, immediately from front to rear of the brigade the men ran to the walls and some into the cornfield, in a most confused and disordered manner," upon which Parsons "used his utmost endeavor to form the brigade into some order upon that ground, but the men were so dispersed he found it impossible." After the exchange of a few shots, Parsons' Continentals were swept along by the current, among whom were Prescott's men who fought at Bunker Hill, and Huntington's men who, with Atlee's, had a few days before twice driven the British with heavy loss from Battle Hill. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions of Washington, Putnam, Parsons and Fellows and other officers, all attempts to rally the unreasoning crowd were "fruitless and ineffectual." The ground on which this occurred was nearly opposite the Grand Central Station, on, or a little east of, Park Avenue. The cross-road deserted, Parsons "rode back into the Bloomingdale Road and there found a considerable part of his brigade, but in no order." Washington, who was then forward on the Road, "sent for Parsons and gave order to form the brigade as soon as could be done and march on to Harlem Heights," which was done "as soon as the brigade could be reduced to any form." This position, which with proper defences could be made practically impregnable, Washington had already taken the precaution to secure.

General Heath, in excuse of this rout pleads that "the wounds received on Long Island were yet bleeding; and that the officers, if not the men, knew that the city was not to be defended." He might have added, that the men well knew

they were alone in the city, in the presence of a victorious enemy and without hope of assistance from the main army on Harlem Heights in case of disaster. The troops were undoubtedly nervous and excited, but they were not the "dastardly sons of cowardice" which some chose to term them—their subsequent record proves to the contrary—nor did they "magnify the number of the enemy to thrice the reality and generate substances from their own shadows," as some not more brave seemed to think. They had watched the enemy afloat on the river for five long hours to little purpose if they did not know their number almost to a man. Neither were they panic-stricken in the proper sense of the term, for it was not on imagination but upon positive knowledge that their fears were based. They understood the situation only too well. It was not Leslie's advance, thrice magnified, which excited their fears, but the four thousand behind him and the six brigades about to cross. Remembering how on Long Island Grant had held Stirling and Parsons by a feint of attacking until Cornwallis could get in their rear and cut off their retreat, they were not disposed to repeat the play at this time for the benefit of Clinton, then coming on to Murray Hill with the main body of the enemy. When Leslie's vanguard appeared, they knew that not a moment was to be lost if they would secure their safety. Retreat at that time was clearly the best generalship, and it is not a little surprising that any serious attempt should have been made to resist the enemy's advance.

No one, certainly, could be a much better judge of the quality of the American troops than General Burgoyne after his experience at Saratoga. Writing concerning them to Lord George Germain, October 20th, 1777, while at General Schuyler's house in Albany, he says:—

"I should hold myself unjustifiable, if I did not confide to your Lordship my opinion upon a near inspection of the rebel troops. The standing corps which I have seen, are disciplined, I do not hazard the term but apply it to the great fundamental points of military institution—sobriety, subordination, regularity and courage. The militia are inferior in method and movement, but not a jot less serviceable in the woods. My conjectures were very different after the affair of Ticonderoga, but I am convinced they were

delusive; and it is my duty to the State to confess it. The panic of the rebel troops is confined and of short duration; the enthusiasm is extensive and permanent."

The affair of Harlem Heights on the 16th greatly inspirited our troops. The British were encamped on the southern slope of what is now known as Morningside Heights, their pickets being near One Hundred and Fifth Street, while the Americans were entrenched on Washington Heights with their pickets posted in the deep valley which, extending diagonally from One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street and Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River at One Hundred and Thirtieth Street, divides the Heights into two parts. A corps of Rangers—about one hundred and twenty picked men taken principally from Parsons' Continentals—had been organized under Lieut. Colonel Knowlton of Durkee's regiment, Parsons' brigade, to act under the immediate orders of the Commander-in-Chief. Desirous of determining the enemy's position, Washington directed Knowlton to make a reconnaissance early on the morning of the 16th. Marching southward, probably on the line of Riverside Drive, Knowlton encountered the enemy's pickets about where One Hundred and Fourth Street crosses the Bloomingdale Road, now the Boulevard. A brisk skirmish ensued, when, the enemy being reinforced, Knowlton was compelled to retreat to the valley, his opponents halting on the northern slope of the hill. With the design of surrounding and capturing this force, Washington ordered a feint of attack in front to draw the enemy into the valley, and at the same time directed Knowlton, reinforced by the Virginia Riflemen under Leitch, to move by the left and take them in the rear. Through some misapprehension or because of the enemy falling back, the attack fell rather upon their flank than upon their rear, so that Knowlton's men as they clambered up the steep rocks were exposed to a heavy fire under which both Knowlton and Leitch fell mortally wounded, the former dying within an hour. The spot where they fell was somewhere between the Boulevard and Fort Laight, part way up the hill. The Rangers continuing their advance and the feint in front developing into a serious attack, the enemy were forced into a

buckwheat field between the Columbia University grounds and Grant's Tomb, where, both sides having been reinforced, the battle raged for two hours, ending with the enemy being driven back to their lines. The British Reserves, the Thirty-third and Forty-second Regiments and four battalions of grenadiers now rapidly advancing, our men were recalled and "giving a Hurrah, left the field in good order." Chasing the British was a new experience to our men and one they heartily enjoyed.

The death of Colonel Knowlton was a severe loss to the army. In his orders of the 17th, Washington referred to him as "the gallant and brave Colonel Knowlton, who would have been an honor to any country." His successor in the command of this corps, had he lived, would have been another officer in Parsons' brigade, Nathan Hale, the Martyr Spy of the Revolution. With its capture at the taking of Fort Washington this select and spirited corps ceased to exist.

CHAPTER IX

BATTLE OF WHITE PLAINS. PARSONS HOLDS EXTREME LEFT OF LINE AT RYE POND. MARCHES TO ATTACK GENERAL AGNEW. IN THE HIGHLANDS AND NEW JERSEY. EXPEDITION WITH CLINTON. RETURNS TO PEEKSKILL. BATTLES OF TRENTON AND PRINCETON. COMMANDS THE LEFT IN HEATH'S ATTACK ON NEW YORK.

September, 1776—February, 1777

SINCE the reorganization of the army following the retreat from Long Island, General Heath had held the important position at Kingsbridge with two brigades under Mifflin and George Clinton. On the 18th of September, Washington wrote him that he had "ordered Parsons' brigade with Scott's and Sargent's, to him at Kingsbridge." After the affair of Harlem Heights, the enemy remained quiet until the morning of October 12th, when Howe, embarking all his army, except two brigades under Earl Percy left to defend New York, passed up the Sound under cover of a heavy fog, and, landing at Throg's Neck in Westchester County, placed himself on Washington's flank with the design of cutting off his communications with the Eastern States and shutting him up on New York Island. The movement was unexpected, but the detachments hurried forward, among them Prescott's regiment of Parsons' brigade, were able by throwing up breastworks across the narrow part of the Neck and by destroying the bridge and causeway, over which ran the only road to the mainland, to check Howe's advance and confine him to the Neck. Here Howe remained for five days. On the 18th, he re-embarked his troops and landed a few miles further east at Pell's Point, whence he advanced to the high ground between East Chester and New Rochelle. At this place he was joined by the Hessian Division under Knyphausen, one of the ablest of the German generals. Indeed, it is said of these Hessians, that their officers were all noblemen and gentlemen, and as a whole

superior to the English officers, and, as military men, the best in Europe at that time.

A Council of War held by the Americans the 16th, while the British were still at Throg's Neck, having decided that their communications with the East could not be kept open if they remained on New York Island, Washington extended his lines along the west side of the Bronx towards White Plains until the baggage and stores could be brought up, when he called in his detachments and concentrated his whole army on the high grounds at the north of the village behind two lines of intrenchments, his right resting on the Bronx, and his left, composed of the brigades of Mifflin, George Clinton, Parsons, Scott and Sargent, under the command of General Heath, on St. Mary's Pond, about two miles east of the village. In this position Heath's division remained during all the operations on the right from October 22d to November 9th, covering the upper road into Connecticut, that near the Sound, the Boston Post Road, being in the possession of the enemy.

Chatterton Hill, an isolated but commanding and easily defended elevation just across the Bronx, less than a mile beyond our right, had been occupied by McDougall with fourteen hundred men, the better to protect our flank. General Howe, having moved up from New Rochelle to Scarsdale, advanced on the morning of the 28th in two columns, the right under Clinton and the left under Von Heister, and after a smart skirmish near the present village of Hart's Corners, arrived in sight of our lines. Seeing McDougall's advantageous position, he directed against it the Hessians and one British brigade, about four thousand men. Crossing the Bronx, they marched along "Mill Lane," up the river and under cover of the hill, until the head of the column was opposite McDougall's left, when, wheeling to the left into line and attempting to charge up the steep face of the hill, they were met by such a deadly fire that it looked from the American camp as though this was to be another Bunker Hill; but Rall, the Hessian Colonel, moving further to his left and ascending the easier southern slope of the hill, suddenly attacked the Americans on their flank and forced them from the field. The loss of the British in killed and wounded was double that of

the Americans. This affair is known as the battle of White Plains, and in it was actively engaged one of Parsons' oldest regiments, that under Colonel Charles Webb.

The enemy after the battle remained inactive except that they extended their lines about a mile towards the North River. "It is a little extraordinary," writes Tench Tilghman, Washington's aid-de-camp, to William Duer, "that this move should be made in our rear. To day Stirling is detached ahead of them to get possession of the passes among the hills, and General Parsons has taken post near the head of Rye Pond, which secures the passes in our front."

On the 23d of October, General Parsons had been ordered to Horseneck in Connecticut (the present village of Greenwich), and before his return, as appears from the following letter written by him to General Clinton, October 30, was advised that his brigade had been ordered to Kingstreet near Rye Pond and the hills of North Castle, and directed to join it there.

CAMP NEAR NORTH CASTLE, *October 30th, 1776.*

DEAR SIR.—I have not had an opportunity to apologize for not fulfilling my agreement in respect to the division of the tents. I gave orders for drawing all the tents in store and the division of them between the three brigades according to the number of men in the brigades; but on Wednesday I was ordered to Horseneck by the General and before my return had orders to repair to this Post and that I should there find this part of my brigade. General Heath then ordered me to draw all the tents in store and use them for covering the men here. I mentioned the agreement made with you, but he said that tents had been sent for from Fishkill and would probably be at the Plains in season for your brigade, and t'would save much trouble by my using those tents for my men. As I do not know that you have any knowledge of the reason why the tents were all taken, I thought it incumbent on me to give you this information lest you should think I had not dealt honorably with you. I apprehended a deserter from Col. Swartout's regiment last night and committed him to my guard who have negligently suffered him to escape.

I am, Sir, yr. h'ble Ser'vt,
SAM'L. H. PARSONS

To Gen. George Clinton.

The morning after the battle, Howe reconnoitered the American intrenchments and, finding them too strong to warrant an assault without reinforcements, awaited the arrival of Earl Percy's brigades, which reaching him on the evening of the 30th, preparations were made to storm the Works the next day; but a tempest of wind and rain, arising in the night and continuing through the following day, delayed the attack. Washington, not deeming it prudent to risk the assault which was certain to be made on the morrow, drew back his right and center on the night of the 31st, to the hills of North Castle, where he was practically beyond the reach of the enemy.

On the 30th, nearly three thousand of the enemy had been seen advancing towards Kingstreet and the Purchase Road with the apparent intention of turning our left and rolling up the line when the general assault ordered for the next day should be made. Although Howe's plan of attack had been frustrated by the storm and the withdrawal of the American right and center, he, nevertheless, on the morning of November first, threw a strong column between Parsons' Post at Rye Pond and Heath's division near St. Mary's Pond, and attempted to capture Malcom's regiment, which was encamped on a wooded slope at some distance from the main body of the troops and separated from them by a deep hollow through which ran a brook, by occupying the hollow and interposing a force between the division and Malcom. Anticipating this design, Heath sent a regiment to take position behind a heavy stone wall which crossed the head of the hollow, and thus effectually barred the further progress of the enemy. Finding that nothing could be accomplished, the British withdrew.

Parsons' brigade remained at Rye Pond until after the 30th, but on or about November first, moved down Kingstreet six or seven miles, to Saw Pits (now the village of Port Chester), for we find from the following letter to General Greene from Washington's Secretary, Col. R. H. Harrison, dated White Plains, November 3, 1776, that Parsons on the 3d was stationed at that place, probably to guard the Post Road and the Posts on the Sound:—

Since my letter of yesterday no event of an interesting nature has turned up, but we have just received intelligence from General Parsons, who is stationed with his brigade at Saw Pits, that a large body of the enemy has advanced within a mile of him. He is on the march to meet them and reqnested some troops to be sent to maintain the lines he has thrown up.

This affair is described at some length in Baird's History of Rye, from which we quote the following:

Just before General Howe withdrew his army from White Plains, a brigade under the command of General Agnew, pushed forward about two miles beyond Rye in hopes of bringing a large detachment of the American Army which was stationed at Saw Pits to an engagement. Not being able to come up with them, they returned on Sunday afternoon, November 3d, to join the royal forces at White Plains. It was a great day for the Royalists at Rye, many of them showing particular marks of joy upon the passage of the King's troops. The American troops reached Rye the same evening and, by the loyalist account, showed their resentment towards the Tory sympathisers by plundering their houses, driving off their cattle, taking away their grain and imprisoning some of those most obnoxious.

The same day Colonel Harrison sent to the President of Congress a letter, just received from General Parsons, complaining of a "most scandalous practice of desertion and returning home, by which the number of our troops is every day decreasing." This was presented to Congress on the 6th. The returns of Parsons' brigade justify this complaint. That of November 3d, shows a total of 3192 men distributed among eleven regiments, as follows:—

Colonel	Prescott 376	Colonel Smith	112
"	Taylor 525	Lt. Col. Throop	194
"	Huntington 322	Lt. Col. Hosford	198
"	Ward 483	Major Rogers	172
"	McIntosh 303		
"	Carpenter 191	Total	3192
"	Cogswell 321		

The returns of November 9th show a total of 1999 men, and

of November 24, of 1316 men. Washington's letters are full of similar complaints.

When Howe found that Washington could not be compelled to fight except on terms most advantageous to himself, he turned his attention to the reduction of Fort Washington and the forts still occupied by the Americans in the vicinity of New York. On the 2d of November, he sent Knyphausen to occupy Kingsbridge, and on the 5th broke camp and marched with his whole army to Dobb's Ferry.

On the 6th a Council of War was held at Headquarters, White Plains, at which were present, His Excellency General Washington, Major Generals Lee, Putnam, Spencer, Heath, Sullivan and Lincoln and Brigadiers Stirling, Mifflin, Nixon, McDougall, Parsons, Scott and Clinton. The matters brought before the Council were in part as follows:

The late movements of the enemy having made it necessary to consider what may be now proposed for this army to do, the General submits to the Council the following questions, viz:

1. Supposing the enemy to be retreating towards New York, will it not be proper to throw a body of troops into the Jerseys immediately? This was unanimously agreed to.

2. Whether it would not be proper to detach immediately all those troops which have been raised on the western side of the Hudson River? This was agreed to with the proviso that in such case the regiments belonging to the east side of the Hudson should be removed to the east side, if the movements of the enemy and the circumstances of the army will admit.

3. What number of men would be necessary to take post at Peekskill and the passes in the Highlands for the defense of those posts, erecting fortifications &c.? The number agreed to was three thousand.

Pursuant to the decision of the Council, Washington on the 9th commenced sending to the Jerseys five thousand troops which he was to command in person. Heath's division was ordered to Peekskill to garrison the Posts in the Highlands both sides of the river. On the 10th, General Lee, who had just arrived from the South wearing the laurels won by Colonel Moultrie in the defense of Charleston, was instructed " to take command of the remainder of the army, about seventy-

five hundred Continental troops and militia, to consider the Post at Croton Bridge as under his immediate care, as also that lately occupied by General Parsons (Saw Pits), to direct the Connecticut troops then at Stamford under General Wooster, and to dispose of the militia regiments which came out with General Saltonstall and were annexed to General Parsons' brigade." On the 11th and 12th, Washington reconnoitered the Highlands with Heath, and, crossing the river, rode through Smiths Clove to Hackensack. On the 18th Heath reported from Peekskill:

" Have sent three regiments of Parsons (Prescott's, Ward's, and Wyllys') and General Scott's brigade to the gorge of the mountain by Robinson's house. General Parsons has importuned me for leave to attend the Governor and Council of Connecticut, which I have granted, and hope for your Excellency's approbation."

Colonel Harrison, Washington's secretary, replied from Hackensack the 20th:

" As General Parsons is a very judicious and good officer and his presence may have a happy influence in the appointment of good officers, I can almost assure you the liberty you have granted him will be approved by his Excellency."

The capture of Fort Washington on the 16th was the severest blow sustained by the Americans during the whole war. Our loss in prisoners alone was over twenty-eight hundred officers and men. This was followed on the 20th by the evacuation of Fort Lee on the opposite side of the Hudson.

The day following the evacuation of Fort Lee, Washington commenced his retreat through the Jerseys with Cornwallis in close pursuit. Leaving Hackensack the 21st, he arrived at Newark the evening of the 22d. Remaining there five days, he moved to Brunswick on the 28th, his rear-guard leaving Newark just as Cornwallis' advance was coming in. December 1, he left Brunswick, Cornwallis entering the town the evening of the same day. Marching by night to Princeton, he left General Lord Stirling with twelve hundred men to watch the enemy while with the rest of the army he pressed on to Tren-

ton. After transferring his baggage and stores to the west side of the Delaware, he faced about to meet Stirling who was retreating before a vastly superior force. Marching his whole army to Trenton, he put the river between it and the enemy, and, securing all the boats for seventy miles up and down the river and placing guards at all the crossings from Coryell's Ferry to Bristol, left Cornwallis baffled and defeated on the eastern side.

On the 7th, as the troops were preparing to cross the Delaware, Washington wrote to Heath in the Highlands directing him

to cross the North River with the troops under your command, to wit, Parsons' brigade, and move so as to give all possible protection to the country and vigor to the cause. If you could move on towards Morristown, New Jersey, it would be best, as by this means a junction may be made if necessary, and at all events such a movement would attract attention.

On receipt of this order, Heath wrote to Parsons:

PEEKSKILL, *December 9, 1776.*

DEAR SIR.—I have this moment received orders from General Washington to move over the North River with the Continental troops under my command, to wit, your brigade. You will, therefore, immediately give orders to Prescott's, Ward's and Wyllys' regiments to be ready to march to-morrow at ten o'clock; tents, kettles and light baggage only to be carried. The heavy baggage to be left with the men who are unfit for duty. Four days provision to be taken. Hard biscuit may be drawn. I am &c

W. HEATH.

To General Parsons.

From Heath's Memoirs we learn that "December 10, 1776, a little after noon, Parsons' brigade marched over to King's Ferry, the greatest alertness having been discovered by both officers and men;" that on the 11th "the troops crossed the Ferry and marched to Haverstraw;" and on the 12th "marched from Haverstraw to Tappan."

On the 8th of December, General Clinton and Earl Percy with six thousand British troops detached from the main army

in New York, had taken possession of Newport and Rhode Island. This created great alarm throughout Connecticut. In reply to a letter from Governor Trumbull asking aid, Washington wrote him on the 14th: "Your situation at the eastward is truly alarming. I have countermanded the march of Heath's division which was coming down from Peekskill. It is ordered to return again to that place and hold itself in readiness to move as occasion may require." In a postscript he says: "Learning from Heath that Parsons was to cross the North River the 10th and must be at Morristown by this time, I have changed my intention in view of the short time his troops have now to serve."

The situation having become less threatening as the intentions of the enemy developed, Washington again writes Heath:—

HEADQUARTERS NEAR CORYELL'S FERRY,
December 16, 1776.

DEAR SIR.—I have received your favor of the 11th inst. advising me of the march of Parsons' brigade from Peekskill to join us. From information as to the enemy I should conceive it expedient that you return Parsons' brigade to your former station.

He also the same day wrote the New York Convention that he had ordered Heath to return to Peekskill.

On the night of December 19 while still in New Jersey, Generals Parsons and Clinton, as the latter writes to the New York Convention from Pyramus,

with five hundred of his troops and mine, set out about dusk on a visit to our friends in the English neighborhood (in the northern part of the State) where we were informed Colonel Buskirk's regiment of new levies and some companies of light infantry were quartered. When we came to the first house in the English neighborhood, we detached Colonel Woodhull with two hundred men to take the enemy in the rear and prevent their escape while we with the remainder of the troops attacked them in front. We surprised their advance guard and were marching to attack their main body, when the enemy, being alarmed by the firing and Woodhull not having yet come up, escaped. It was, however, a successful little expedition. We took twenty-three prisoners, eighteen excellent new

muskets, a wagon and eight horses and killed four or five. Had it not been so exceeding cold and the men beat out with the length of the march, which, by the route we took, was at least twenty-eight miles, I have not the least doubt we should have killed or taken the whole party.

On the 22d, Parsons' brigade commenced its return march to Peekskill, reaching there the next day. On the 26th of December, five of Parsons' regiments were to be paid off, their term of service expiring at the end of the month. While at Peekskill attending to this matter, General Parsons writes as follows to his youngest son, Thomas, then about nine years of age:

PEEKSKILL, *December 27, 1776.*

DEAR THOMAS.—I have sent two soldiers to live at your house. One understands French and the other painting. You may learn something by them. I wish you to remember your books. Be virtuous and manly in your behavior, a comfort to your mother and family. Leave off all childish follies and learn to behave with decency and manly fortitude. Lay aside that bashful conduct. A modest behavior with resolution and courage will endear you to all your acquaintances. Falsehood and lies you must always abhor and detest.

Billy will be at home next week. When I shall come home I can't tell, but remember, if I fall in this war, I expect you and all my sons to arm in defense of your glorious liberty and lay down your lives in defense of your country and to avenge my death, if necessary.

Yours &c.,

SAM'L. H. PARSONS.

No sooner had Washington secured the safety of his army beyond the Delaware, than he began to plan how with the troops coming to his assistance he might strike some "lucky blow which would be fatal to the enemy and rouse the spirits of the people, which are quite sunk by our late misfortunes." At Trenton were three regiments of Hessians and a troop of British light-horse. On Christmas night, with twenty-four hundred Continentals under his immediate command, moving in two columns under Sullivan and Greene, Washington crossed the Delaware at McKonkey's Ferry, and reaching Trenton at eight o'clock in the morning, the two columns attacked simul-

taneously from opposite points, and in less than an hour captured over nine hundred prisoners and a thousand stands of arms. The news of this success brought Cornwallis with seven thousand veteran troops down from Princeton, before whom the Americans retired to the high grounds beyond the Assanpink River. During the night, leaving his camp fires burning, Washington, taking the roundabout road to Princeton, arrived there early in the morning and without delay attacked the three British regiments left there by Cornwallis, putting them to flight with the loss of nearly five hundred killed, wounded and prisoners. Cornwallis retracing his steps, Washington retreated to his high grounds and went into winter quarters at Morristown.

On the 5th of January, 1777, Washington wrote from Pluckemin to General Heath:

> The enemy are in great consternation, and as the panic affords us a favorable opportunity to drive them out of the Jerseys, it has been determined in Council that you should move down towards New York with a considerable force as if you had a design upon the city. That being an object of great importance, the enemy will be reduced to the necessity of withdrawing a considerable part of their force from the Jerseys, if not the whole, to secure the city. I shall draw the force on this side of the North River together at Morristown, where I shall watch the motions of the enemy and avail myself of every favorable circumstance. You will retain for the expedition four thousand of the militia coming from the New England Governments.

Washington expected much from this expedition. Writing to Lincoln, who was to take an active part in it, he says:

> If the enemy does not throw a considerable body back again (from New Jersey) you may in all probability carry the city, or at least, blockade them in it. . . . Be as expeditious as possible in moving forward, for the sooner a panic-struck enemy is followed, the better.

Lincoln had brought down six thousand militia from Massachusetts, two thousand of whom were to join Washington in New Jersey. John Morin Scott's brigade had been for

nearly two months with Heath in the Highlands. Wooster, since the battle of White Plains, had been guarding the western part of Connecticut. General Parsons, who had gone to the Highlands in November, had been since the 8th of January encamped on Kingstreet, a road in the town of Rye running northerly along the high plateau on the west side of the Byram River, overlooking Port Chester, and a frequent camping ground for troops throughout the Revolutionary War.

The following is an extract from a letter written from this camp by Parsons to his wife:

KINGSTREET, *12th January, 1777.*

MY DEAR.—Could I have enjoyed the pleasure of my family without staining my honor, I should have accepted my General's permission and before this time have been at home. An attack upon the enemy in this country is determined upon, the troops are assembling and the middle of this week will doubtless determine the success of the enterprise. If I am fortunate to survive a successful attack, I shall return home with the tidings.

The remarkable success of our arms since the 25th of December has inspired new courage in all ranks, and it now seems the wish of every man to push the advantage with the utmost assiduity, whilst the consternation which has seized the enemy remains. A more particular account of the movements of the army than you have received may perhaps be agreeable to you.

He then gives a brief account of the battles of Trenton and Princeton.

Heath's little army marched in three divisions; Lincoln with the Massachusetts men by the road along the east side of the Hudson; Scott with his New Yorkers, by way of White Plains; and Wooster and Parsons with the Connecticut militia from New Rochelle and East Chester. On the 18th, just before sunrise, the three divisions reached the enemy's outposts in the neighborhood of Kingsbridge nearly at the same time. After a little skirmishing and the capture of a few prisoners, Heath summoned Fort Independence to surrender. "Twenty minutes only can be allowed for the garrison to give their answer, and should it be in the negative, they must abide the consequences," was Heath's ultimatum. The Hessian garrison, perhaps not understanding English or not impressed by Heath's lofty and

peremptory tone, avoided the threatened consequences of an answer in the negative by sending no answer at all. The Fort, nevertheless, was not attacked, and Heath, after maintaining his position firmly for ten days, retired towards White Plains. No troops were drawn from the Jerseys by this diversion and but a single brigade was returned from Rhode Island. Heath was severely censured for his conduct of the expedition, not only by Washington, but by his own officers. General Scott and William Duer, both members of the New York Convention, each wrote General Washington disapproving the manner in which it had been conducted, and General Parsons expressed himself to the same effect. Duer writing January 28th, said:—

Brigadier General Parsons, who came down with us from Peekskill, has gone back to Connecticut, not choosing, as I conceive, to risk his reputation by a longer stay here . . . Should your Excellency wish to know to what our want of success is to be attributed, I must beg leave to refer to your own judgment of the character of men; observing only, that it is my private opinion, that if measures could be devised, without injuring the public service, that either General Mifflin, General Parsons or General Clinton could direct our operations in this part of the County of Westchester, that the enemy would not only be driven from this County, but other measures might probably be devised for pushing our success and harassing the enemy.

Scott, writing on the 14th of February, said:—

I wish I had it in my power to give you a favorable account of our little expedition, which I imagine, would have been successful beyond expectation, had it not been for certain reasons; when I found it had dwindled into a mere foraging business, I thought it my duty to return to the Convention.

In a private letter to Heath, dated February 3d, 1777. Washington wrote:—

This letter is to hint to you, and I do it with concern, that your conduct is censured (and by men of sense and judgment who were with you on the expedition to Fort Independence), as being fraught

with too much caution, by which the army has been disappointed and in some sense disgraced. Your summons, as you did not attempt to fulfil your threats, was not only idle but farcical, and will not fail of turning the laugh exceedingly against us. These things I mention to you as a friend. Why you should be so apprehensive of being surrounded, even if Lord Percy had landed, I cannot conceive. You know that landing men and procuring horses is not the work of an hour, a day or even a week. Upon the whole it appears to me from information, that, if you had pushed vigorously upon your first going to Fort Independence, the Post would have been carried.

Heath had given as a reason for his retreat, "that his troops could not stand the inclemency of the weather, and that he feared the troops expected from Rhode Island would land upon his back." Replying, February 6th, to Washington's letters of the 3d and 4th, after speaking of the pain caused by his rebuke, Heath goes on to say:—

Before I received your Excellency's orders to move myself towards Kingsbridge, upon the application of the Committee of the State of New York, I appointed General Parsons to take the command of the troops destined for their secret expedition. He gave me his answer in writing, accepting the command in obedience to orders, but, at the same time, desiring that his answer might remain in writing, that it might appear, that, although he cheerfully obeyed orders, yet that he considered the taking the command of a body of militia for such an attempt, to use his own words, as a sacrifice of his character. By your Excellency's orders to me, his has escaped, but it seems mine is to receive the fatal stab.

The results of the campaign now closed were far from flattering to the British Commander. Notwithstanding his immense preparations and the best efforts of his splendid army and powerful fleet, the only territory remaining under his control was Newport in Rhode Island, New York and the adjacent Islands, and New Jersey as far Amboy and Brunswick.

CHAPTER X

RECRUITING THE CONNECTICUT LINE. INOCULATION OF THE TROOPS. TRYON'S RAID ON DANBURY. DEATH OF WOOSTER. CORRESPONDENCE WITH WASHINGTON. MEIGS EXPEDITION TO SAG HARBOR.

January—June, 1777

THE Continental establishment of 1776 had been disbanded on the 31st of December, and the army now in the field was composed almost entirely of militia and State troops. Experience had shown that a more permanent army was necessary in order to cope successfully with the British Regulars. To provide such a one, Congress, by its resolutions of September and October, 1776, had authorized the enlistment of eighty-eight regiments of the Line, to serve for three years or during the war, besides cavalry and artillery. It had also, upon the urgent representations of Washington, provided for the raising of sixteen "additional regiments," so called, to be recruited from the country at large. All these troops were to be enlisted, organized, disciplined, armed and equipped before the opening of the next campaign. Of the regiments of the Line, eight were to be furnished by Connecticut, to be known during the war as the "Connecticut Line." Besides these regiments, there were also recruited during the year in the State, the "additional regiment" of Colonel Samuel B. Webb, Washington's late aid-de-camp, Sheldon's regiment of dragoons and parts of Lamb's artillery and other organizations. Generals Putnam, Spencer and Arnold being on duty outside the State, and Wooster being occupied in guarding the Westchester lines, the duty of supervising the enlistment and of organizing the Connecticut Line, devolved mainly on General Parsons. The inducements to enlist offered in Washington's orders of December 17th, were a bounty of twenty dollars, a suit of clothes annually and a hundred acres of land upon the expiration of

the term of service. Tories, deserters from the King's army, boys and slaves were not to be enlisted. "To encourage the brave and spirited to enter the service, the General promises them all the plunder they shall take from the enemy, to be equally divided among the officers and men according to their pay." This order was so misunderstood and abused, that on the 21st of January, Washington issued another order modifying and explaining the previous order and limiting "the indulgence to scouting parties as a reward for the extraordinary fatigue, hardship and danger they were exposed to." The property captured was not to be divided, but the proceeds, after appraisement and sale. The practice of plundering the inhabitants under the specious pretence of their being Tories, was prohibited under penalty of severe punishment, and the troops were urged "to protect and support the poor and distressed inhabitants and not to multiply and increase their calamities."

On the 22d of January, while Heath was still encamped at Kingsbridge, General Parsons by permission of Washington left camp to urge forward the recruiting in Connecticut. Joining the army, Friday, the 31st, after its return to White Plains, he went with Heath's consent to Fairfield, whence he wrote to Washington as follows:

FAIRFIELD, *February 3, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—According to your express permission I came into this State the 22d of January to give what assistance I could to the recruiting service and to forming and regulating the troops. The 25th I received General Heath's orders to return to camp near Kingsbridge which I obeyed with some degree of reluctance as I could not see the necessity of my presence there. I found General Heath at White Plains last Friday, when he again consented I should return to this State . . . Our little army consisted of about three or four thousand as good men I think as I ever saw collected together and some exceedingly good officers to command them. . . . The little time I was in the State made it impossible for me to become acquainted with any degree of certainty as to the number of recruits raised in the State. Have ordered returns for every regiment to be forwarded to your Excellency. I imagine the number enlisted does not exceed one thousand to fifteen hundred. . . . As we are situated on the sea-coast, excursions might

be made against the enemy with success and distress them by destroying forage, wagons, &c. I should be glad to receive your Excellency's permission to make attempts, in which case I should be glad to know in what light those who have taken the oath of allegiance to Great Britain are to be regarded, and whether estates of those who have taken active part against the country are to be considered enemy's property.

I am yr Excellency's Obt. Servt.

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

To this Washington sent the following reply:

MORRISTOWN, *February 8, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—Yesterday I received yours of the 3d inst. Since General Heath, by his retreat to White Plains, has given the enemy time to recover themselves, I do not know at this time what can better be done in that quarter, than adopting the plan you propose of crossing over to the east end of Long Island and destroying the forage. I am so fully convinced of the good effect of this enterprise, that I have ordered it to be done generally in the neighborhood of the enemy here, in which success has attended us to our utmost wish. You will endeavor at the same time to bring off all the draft horses fit for service. Colonel Henry B. Livingston of New York State, was lately with me, and has my orders for this purpose. With him you will please to concert a good plan.

From the enclosed proclamation you will be able to regulate your conduct with regard to the Tories. No form of oath of allegiance is yet drawn up, but you can easily strike off one that will answer the end designed. They have permission to carry in with them their necessary wearing apparel, but nothing that can possibly be useful to the enemy. Their estates must be secured till the civil power determines what shall be done. I have written to the New England States on the subject of arming the troops they are to raise. You will get their answer. You will please to publish the enclosed general order [that against plundering].

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

Two days later Washington writes to Parsons requesting him to give orders for inoculating the Connecticut troops, and to postpone the proposed expedition if it will interfere with the inoculation.

MORRISTOWN, *February 10th, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—Since I wrote to you on the 8th inst., I have been compelled from the spreading of the small pox in our army to submit to the necessity of inoculation and have accordingly ordered all the Continental troops now here and coming from the Western States to be inoculated immediately on their arrival. You will therefore give orders for the inoculating the Connecticut troops; and as Governor Cooke is ordered to forward on the Rhode Island troops to Connecticut for this purpose, you will also have proper attention paid to them. I need not recommend to you the greatest secrecy and dispatch in this business, because a moments reflection will inform you that should the enemy discover our situation, they cannot fail taking advantage of it.

You may not perhaps be able to reconcile this order with the enterprise proposed in my former letter against Long Island. If that can be carried on at the same time with inoculation I would by no means have you decline; but if one must give way to the other, (of which you will be the best judge) inoculation being of the greatest importance, must have the preference and the enterprise be laid aside. It will be best to draw the troops within as small a circle as possible towards Peekskill to have them inoculated; by this means if proper care is used, the danger of the infection spreading will be small and the country have but little cause to dread it.

I am yours &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

The inoculating of the troops unavoidably postponed the execution of the proposed plan of invading Long Island until after they had been ordered to join the main army; but later on it was carried out with signal success.

On Friday, February 7, General Parsons conferred with the Connecticut Council of Safety on the subject of clothing for the soldiers, great difficulty having been experienced in procuring a sufficient quantity for the new levies. Fears being expressed as to the safety of the eastern part of the State, it was voted that he be "desired to draw on Colonels Huntington's and Durkee's battalions to man the Posts and Forts at New London, Groton and Stonington for defense."

Writing from Lyme in Connecticut, February 10, 1777, Parsons reports that he is "employed in recruiting and forwarding the eight battalions to be raised in this State, and that

he has sent to Peekskill for five hundred stands of arms." Alluding to the jealousy between the several States, he says:— "I wish all distinctions between States to be buried in everlasting oblivion, and therefore desire nothing for this or any other State which will give occasion for any strife. I shall use my utmost diligence whilst here to promote the recruiting service in which I hope to do some good." Again on the 19th, he writes from Lyme as to the exchange of Captain Wells of Glastenbury and tells of the effect produced by the cruel treatment of the American prisoners in New York: "The inhuman treatment our prisoners received from the British officers in New York has proved the death of much the greater part of those who came out of the city in this part of the country. I believe about three-fourths are dead since returning home. The remaining few burn with rage against the enemy and exceedingly desire to engage again in the service of their country."

February 16, General Parsons orders "Lieut. Daniel Waite to take a party of twenty soldiers enlisted into the Continental Army and proceed in whaleboats to Long Island to seize vegetables and provisions bound for New York. All plundering of the inhabitants is strictly forbidden." Writing from Lyme, February 23, he reports to Washington the results of the expedition and asks as to linen and other goods seized, and recommends that raids be made on Huntington and Oyster Bays, and offers to make the trial with his permission.

The smallpox having become very prevalent among the new recruits and it having been found impossible to prevent it spreading through the army, Washington wrote to the Governor and Council of Connecticut on the 10th of February, that he had determined to inoculate all the new troops who had not had the disease; and that to this end he had given directions to General Parsons to superintend the inoculation of the Continental troops in that State. The Governor and Council thereupon ordered that the new troops for Continental service should be inoculated, and General Parsons was desired to consult the authorities of the towns, who were directed to co-operate with him, and to report to the Governor from time to time his progress in the business. February 24, Governor Trumbull

writing from Lebanon to General Washington as to inoculating the troops, says: "I am happy to find General Parsons disposed to give his attention to render the measure as effective as possible." March 6 Parsons writes from Lyme to General Washington, acknowledging the receipt of his letters of the 8th, 10th and 18th of February and advising him that he had already established in the State a hospital for inoculating recruits," but that the inoculating the troops renders it impossible at this time to make a descent on Long Island; that he will send on levies as fast as they can be armed and clothed; and that about thirteen hundred and eighty men have already been enlisted for the eight regiments of the line and Samuel B. Webb's "additional regiment." "Nothing," he adds, "shall be wanting to promoting, recruiting and forwarding troops or any other service assigned me."

On the 8th he writes from New London as to the recruiting and says, "but such is the amazing lethargy of the country that little short of the sound of the last trumpet will rouse them to realize their danger and awake them to their duty." . . . "There is too much reason to believe that idleness in some and dissipation in other recruiting officers prevails too much for the public weal, but I hope this does not prevail very generally. I hope to send six hundred men next week."

In the minutes of the Council of March 17, it is noted that "General Parsons and Colonel Bradley were present at a meeting of the Governor and Council and considerable time was spent with them in arranging officers, &c. and exchanging places among subalterns."

On the 21st of March, Parsons writes of the difficulty of recruiting and assures "his Excellency of the support of the Assembly." The same day Governor Trumbull wrote to Washington: "I flatter myself that General Parsons will in ten days or a fortnight send you a battalion of Continental troops from this State and hope more will soon follow." Writing further, as to inoculation, he says: "I requested Parsons that the troops might be inoculated in the western part of the State, and, while convalescing, might be stationed at Stamford, Horseneck and Danbury. As to the marching of troops I conclude that General Parsons gives frequent information."

April 3, Washington writes to General Parsons as follows:

MORRISTOWN, *3 April, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—My letters of the 20th and 29th Ulto. will convey evident proofs to you of my extreme solicitude respecting the assembling of our troops; and yet, as I have but too much reason to believe, that dissipation in some and the comfortable enjoyment of domestic pleasures in others, have had an unhappy influence upon the conduct of recruiting officers, I must again repeat the urgent necessity there is for the officers of every denomination exerting themselves to the utmost in bringing forward the new levies.

General Howe is vigorous in his preparations; the troops at Rhode Island, from the best intelligence I have been able to get, were about to embark; a number (to the amount it is said of 3000) have actually embarked from New York and Amboy, and are now at the watering place near the Narrows. In short, the campaign is opening, and we have no men for the field. If this is owing to the causes above mentioned, the officers employed in the recruiting service must expect to be answerable for the consequences. If they have done their duty, and it proceeds from unwillingness in the men to enlist, the Government must have recourse to coercive measures; for if the quotas required from each state cannot be had by voluntary enlistment, in time, and the powers of Government are not adequate to drafting, there is an end to the contest and opposition becomes vain. I therefore wish you to see Governor Trumbull and converse with him on the importance of this subject, for delay in obtaining the men, falls very little short of not getting them at all. If the enemy, for want of men to oppose them, can march through the country in triumph, or if the opposition is so feeble as to become ineffectual, and our army thereby destroyed by piecemeals, the bad effects of either is much easier to be conceived, than described, and should be avoided if possible.

The eight regiments of your State I would have divided into two brigades as follows:

First.	Second.
1. Colo. Chas. Webb.	2. Colo. Huntington.
3. " Wyllys.	4. " Bradley.
5. " Douglas.	6. " Chandler.
7. " Durkee.	8. " Swift.

The first brigade to be under your immediate command; the second to be under the care of the eldest colonel (superintended by you) till General Spencer arrives, or a brigadier is appointed to it.

All the officers and men of these brigades to march immediately to Peekskill, except such as have not had the small pox, and are now under inoculation, and except such officers as are necessary for the care of the sick, and for recruiting, which ought to be attended to and prosecuted with all possible vigor. Take care to give me previous notice of the arrival of these troops at the Kills, that (if the exigencies of affairs require it) they may be immediately ordered on to Headquarters without loss of time.

I am &c.

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

April 4, General Parsons reports from New Haven that the total enlistments in the State are fifteen hundred and fifty-two, and that "some of the troops began their march to join the army yesterday." . . . "I feel myself exceedingly distressed that the troops are so very backward and the recruiting service so slowly prosecuted. I am conscious I have omitted no pains to arm, clothe and forward the marching of the levies, and nothing on my part shall be wanting." On the 6th, he again writes General Washington from New Haven:

I have received your letters of the 6th, 12th, 20th and 29th of March. The first detachment of the troops from this State will march from Danbury on Tuesday morning under the command of Lieut. Col. Butler of Wyllys' regiment. Nothing has been or shall be wanting on my part to forward to camp every person who is able to march.

From my soul I ardently wish and desire your Excellency may receive every necessary aid from this and every other State. I think your Excellency's censure on the dilatory conduct of some recruiting officers but too well founded. I have spent my whole time in riding from place to place in this State to animate the officers to their duty and endeavor to put everything in forwardness to march. The gentleman who commands this detachment is a worthy and brave officer and I hope will meet your approbation. A more particular answer to your letters I will send by next post.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

April 14, 1777, General Parsons in published orders, directed Huntington's and Durkee's regiments to rendezvous at Norwich, Wyllys' at Hartford, Douglas' at New Haven, Swift's at

New Milford, Chas. Webb's, Bradley's and Chandler's at Danbury, Samuel B. Webb's at Wethersfield and Lieut. Col. Meigs' with the half of Sherburne's regiment under his command, at Middletown. From these points the troops were ordered to march to Peekskill, New York, as soon as possible.

April 15, Parsons writing from Lyme to General Washington as to the condition of the recruiting service, says:

I have ordered all recruits who have not had small pox to Danbury to be inoculated. On the desire of the Governor and Council I have sent for three thousand stands of arms from Portsmouth, which, I suppose, are arrived at Norwich, which, with about eight hundred arms received at Peekskill and what can be furnished from this State, I hope will arm our troops. The number of troops reported to date is nineteen hundred and fifty-six.

Danbury, April 22, he further reports to Washington the state of the recruiting, and writes respecting the facts developed up on the trial of Robert Thompson by a court-martial, as follows:

In the course of this enquiry it appears to be the general expectation of the Tories that the enemy will soon land on the coast about twenty miles from this place and attempt to secure or destroy the magazine of provisions here. Of late considerable bodies of disaffected persons have collected in this neighborhood, and it seems their intention to join the enemy on landing. As the stores are of great importance, I think it highly necessary that a strong guard should be kept here.

Three days after this letter was written, the expected raid occurred. Two thousand British troops under Governor Tryon, on the 25th of April landed near Fairfield and marching to Danbury, twenty-three miles distant, set fire to the public stores, including some seventeen hundred much-needed tents, and to several private dwellings. Generals Silliman, Arnold and Wooster, collecting a body of militia, endeavored to intercept the raiders on their return. Wooster boldly attacked the rear of the retreating column and fell mortally wounded. Arnold threw up a breastwork across a road along which the enemy were to pass, where a sharp conflict ensued when they appeared lasting nearly an hour. The Americans finally gave

way but rallied and pursued the enemy to their boats in which they got off during the night of the 28th.

May 2, General Parsons, upon receiving news of the losses at Danbury, writes from New Haven urging the necessity of retaining troops in the State to protect the magazines of provisions, and says he has consulted with General Arnold who is of the same opinion.

Morristown, May 7, 1777, General Washington writes General McDougall: "As Generals Arnold and Parsons may not be in New Haven, for which place their letters are directed, I beg you will send them on by a person who will see to the delivery of them, as they are of consequence."

Hartford, May 11, 1777, General Parsons writes to General Washington:—

DEAR GENERAL.—The 5th inst. I was honored with the receipt of yours of the 23d of April. I have ordered all the troops in this State who are of the Continental Army to New Haven and Danbury. Governor Trumbull desires me to post them there until he shall receive an answer to a letter he has sent your Excellency respecting the defense of this State. As their march to Peekskill, if they should be ordered there, will be little retarded by it, I have directed their rendezvous at these two places, and shall order them to New Haven and westward on the sea coast, and hope the Governor will soon receive your Excellency's answer, so I may be able to give satisfaction to you and to him. I cannot think a descent on the coast of this State very probable, unless it be to distract our attention from some capital attempt on the Post near the North River or some other place of more consequence than the possession of any post within this State; however, of this your Excellency has the best means of judging. The draft ordered by the Governor and Council I fear has not been so effectual as I hoped, but the number of recruits added by that measure is not yet fully known. . . .

On this view of the matter I have come to this place where the General Assembly are now sitting, to endeavor to procure the Assembly to pursue some decisive measure to fill up the quota of this State immediately, and I think there are fair prospects of their adopting measures which will not fail of accomplishing my hopes; at present, I don't know that I can do more service in any way than by remaining here until they have gone through their proposals for raising of the levies. . . .

Some of the posts on Long Island I think might be surprised with little danger of loss. If our condition is such that we can spare a few hundred of our troops for this purpose, there appears from the situation of our prisoners a pretty good prospect of succeeding in an attempt to retake and bring them off.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM'L. H. PARSONS.

Hartford, May 15, 1777, General Parsons again writes to General Washington:

I have received your letter of the 7th inst. and have ordered all the troops who have had the small pox and are able to march, to Peekskill. By the number wanting still to complete our battalions, with those who have not yet been through the small pox, 'tis probable we shall soon have two or three thousand men who have not had the disease. . . . I have received a request from the Governor and Council of this State, a copy of which I herewith send you. As I could not comply with their desires without your Excellency's direction, I have stayed those troops only who have not had the small pox or are in a convalescent state." He reports the number of recruits at thirty-two hundred and fifty-one, and says that "this with the addition of officers makes us more than half our quota. The prospects of completing the battalions are good. Nothing on my part shall be omitted which can forward this service.

Thirteen transports have gone to Newport. There is no certainty of troops being on board. From the information we have here, we have no reason to believe that any considerable number has gone from thence to New York. I have no great apprehension of a descent on our coast, but think we may make some on theirs to advantage.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

To Parsons' letter of May 11th, Washington replied as follows:

MORRISTOWN, *17th May, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—I was favored yesterday with your letter of the 11th instant. I wrote to Governor Trumbull fully and informed him that no part of the troops exacted from the State could remain there. This letter I presume has reached the Governor, and I trust the observations contained in it would satisfy him of the necessity

of drawing the whole troops together. I think with you that the enemy will make no impressions into Connecticut. If they attempt anything of the sort, it will be to call our attention from more important objects. It is much to be wished that they would prosecute the war on a partisan or detached plan. Nothing could more certainly ensure their destruction. The troops, as fast as they can be raised, and their recovery from the small pox will admit, must come on to Peekskill.

I am sorry the expedient adopted by the Governor and Council for filling their quota of men has not been attended with all the advantages expected from it. I wish their next attempt may have more happy consequences. I am persuaded your remaining in the State some time longer would be of service; yet as I consider the defense of the fortifications and passes through the Highlands an object of the last importance, and possessing them most probably to form the chief end of the enemy's counsels and immediate operations, I wish you to come to Peekskill and there continue with the troops, till some further disposition shall become necessary or may be ordered. At the same time I would wish you to fix upon and leave behind a sufficient number of proper officers to collect and hasten on the recruits as fast as they are raised and gone through inoculation. Perhaps more than one may be necessary; and I have no doubt you will choose for this purpose such as will be of great activity and industry, and in whose conduct the most implicit confidence may be reposed.

How far the expedition to Long Island would be practicable, supposing our army was full, I cannot determine. In our present position we have no men to spare for the purpose. Further, I am by no means satisfied that the rules of war would justify our detaching a force to recover our prisoners under the present circumstances. I rather think they would not; but without going into a full discussion of the measure, either upon the principles of war or justice, I am certain that policy strongly forbids the attempt. Success in such case would lead to unhappy consequences. No future prisoners would receive the same favorable indulgence, so essential to their health and comfort, and it would authorize their imposing on them a more close and severe confinement. You are not to infer from hence, that I esteem the recovery of prisoners unjustifiable in all cases, or have any doubts respecting the propriety of it.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

The expedient referred to was to fill up the Continental regi-

ments with men drafted from the militia to serve until January 1, the regular enlistments to continue meanwhile. Parsons had suggested an expedition to Long Island from Connecticut, and had asked Washington's opinion as to the propriety of attempting the rescue of the American prisoners in the vicinity of Flatbush.

May 21, Parsons writes from New Haven that it is so late in the season that it seems useless to inoculate the troops and asks whether he shall continue it. He reports the embarkation of British troops for Long Island; will forward detachments, but finds it difficult to provide sufficient clothing.

While in New Haven about the middle of May, General Parsons, learning that the enemy was collecting forage on the east end of Long Island for the supply of their army in New York, ordered a detachment under Colonel Meigs to proceed to Sag Harbor and destroy it. The following report made by General Parsons to General Washington, gives the details of the expedition:

NEW HAVEN, *May 25th, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—Having received information that the enemy were collecting forage, horses, &c., on the east end of Long Island, I ordered a detachment from the several regiments then at this place, consisting of one major, four captains, viz: Troop, Pond, Mansfield and Savage, and nine subalterns, and two hundred and twenty men, non-commissioned officers and privates, under the command of Col. Meigs, to attack their different posts on that part of the Island, and destroy forage, &c., which they had collected. Col. Meigs embarked his men here, in thirteen whale boats, the 21st inst., and proceeded to Guilford, but the wind proving high and the sea rough, could not pass the Sound until Friday, the 23d. He left Guilford at one o'clock on the afternoon of the 23d, with one hundred and seventy of his detachment, and under convoy of two armed sloops, and in company with another unarmed, (to bring off prisoners), crossed the Sound to the north branch of the Island near Southold, where he arrived about 6 o'clock in the evening; the enemy's troops on this branch of the Island had marched for New York two days before; but about sixty of the enemy remaining at a place called Sag Harbor, about fifteen miles distant on the south branch of the Island, he ordered eleven whale boats, with as many men as could be safely transported across the bay, over the

land to the bay, where they re-embarked to the number of one hundred and thirty, and at about twelve o'clock arrived safe across the bay, within four miles of the harbor, where having secured the boats in the woods under care of a guard, Col. Meigs formed his little remaining detachment in proper order for attacking the different posts and quarters of the enemy, and securing the vessels and forage at the same time. They marched in the greatest order and silence, and at two o'clock arrived at the harbor. The several divisions, with fixed bayonets, attacked the guards and posts assigned them, whilst Capt. Troop, with the detachment under his command, secured the vessels and forage lying at the wharf. The alarm soon became general, when an armed schooner of twelve guns and seventy men, within one hundred and fifty yards of the wharf, began a fire upon our troops, which continued without cessation for three-quarters of an hour, with grape and round shot, but the troops with the greatest intrepidity returned the fire upon the schooner and set fire to the vessels and forage and killed and captured all the soldiers and sailors, except about six, who made their escape under cover of the night. Twelve brigs and sloops, one an armed vessel with twelve guns, about one hundred and twenty tons of pressed hay, oats, corn and other forage, ten hogsheads of rum and a large quantity of other merchandise, were entirely consumed. It gives me the greatest satisfaction to hear the officers and soldiers without exception, behaved with the greatest bravery, order and intrepidity.

Col. Meigs having finished the business on which he was sent, returned safe with all his men to Guilford by two o'clock P. M. yesterday, with ninety prisoners, having in twenty-five hours, by land and water, transported his men full ninety miles, and succeeded in his attempts beyond my most sanguine expectations, without losing a single man, either killed or wounded. It gives me singular pleasure to hear no disposition appeared in any one soldier to plunder the inhabitants or violate private property in the smallest degree, and that even the clothing and other articles belonging to the prisoners, the soldiers, with a generosity not learned from British troops, have with great cheerfulness restored to them where they have fallen into their hands.

Maj. Humphreys, who waits on your Excellency with the account, was in the action with Col. Meigs, and will be able to give any further necessary information.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

In reply to Parsons' letter of the 25th, Washington wrote as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, MIDDLEBROOK, *29th May, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—I was just now favored with your letter of the 25th by Major Humphreys. The intelligence communicated by it is truly interesting and agreeable, and now I shall take occasion, not only to give you my hearty approbation of your conduct in planning the expedition to Long Island, but to return my sincere thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Meigs and to all officers and men engaged in it. This enterprise, so fortunate in the execution, will greatly distress the enemy in the important and essential article of forage, and reflects much honor on those who performed it. I shall be happy to reward merit when in my power, and therefore wish you to inquire for a vacant ensigncy in some of the regiments for Sergeant Ginnings, to which you will promote him, advising me of the same and the time.

As I could only repeat what I have said in my former letters to you and to Governor Trumbull on the subject of his and the Assembly's request for part of the troops to remain in Connecticut, it is unnecessary for me to say more respecting it, than that I cannot possibly comply with it at this time. The passes and fortifications in the Highlands are of the last importance, and every means in our power must be employed to secure them. If the enemy's movements, which most probably will be understood in a little time, should be such as to show that Hudson's River is not their object, and the state of the troops will admit, I shall with great pleasure post a part of them about White Plains and Stamford, and give every protection I can to Connecticut, consistent with the general interest; but till these events take place, neither prudence nor policy will justify me in sparing men. You will, agreeably to my request, repair to Peekskill after making the necessary orders about the troops.

I am, with great esteem &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

Congress voted a sword to Colonel Meigs in recognition of the "prudence, activity, enterprise and valor" with which the expedition had been conducted. The event was noted with commendation in General Orders.

General Parsons having given the necessary orders respecting the recruiting and forwarding of the troops, repaired to

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Peekskill, as requested by Washington in his letter of the 29th of May. From that place, under date of June 12, he writes to Washington, acknowledging the receipt of his letters of the 25th and 29th, and advising him of the condition in which he left the recruiting service and of the changes and promotions among the officers, and says: "Your Excellency's approbation of the expedition to Long Island affords me particular satisfaction. I hope it will ever be my highest ambition to promote the highest good of my country."

CHAPTER XI

CAMPAIGN OF 1777. PARSONS REINFORCES WASHINGTON IN NEW JERSEY. LETTER TO HIS WIFE. BURGOYNE'S MOVEMENT. PARSONS ORDERED TO THE DEFENSE OF THE HIGHLANDS. HIS EXPEDITION TO SETAUKET. BRANDYWINE AND GERMANTOWN. SURRENDER OF BURGOYNE.

December, 1777—December, 1778

PEEKSKILL, on the west side of the Hudson and at the southern gate of the Highlands, was selected by Washington as the rendezvous for the New York and New England troops for reasons which he states in his letter of March 12 to General Schuyler:—"If the troops are drawn together there, they will be advantageously situated to give support to any of the Eastern or Middle States. Should the enemy's design be to penetrate the country up the North River, they will be well placed to oppose them; should they attempt to penetrate into New England, they will be well stationed to cover it; if they move westward, the eastern and southern troops can easily form a junction; and, besides, it will oblige the enemy to leave a much stronger garrison at New York, and they will by no means be disadvantageously posted to reinforce Ticonderoga and cover the country around Albany." Soon after the battle of White Plains, the command at Peekskill was assigned to General Heath; but when he left for Massachusetts early in March, it devolved upon General McDougall, who, although appointed brigadier at the same time as Parsons, ranked him, his name standing one higher on the list. In June, McDougall was superseded by Putnam, Washington regarding the Post of such importance as to require a division commander.

The British Ministry having advised General Howe that but a small part of the reinforcements asked for would be sent to America, he had abandoned his proposed attempt against New England and had written Carleton that he could not co-operate with the Northern Army by a movement in force up the Hudson. His plan now was, to proceed to Philadelphia by

water rather than risk a march through the Jerseys; but his first object was to bring on a general engagement and either destroy or greatly weaken the American Army. All this, however, was unknown to Washington, and consequently the movements of the enemy at the commencement of the campaign were very perplexing. The Highlands, New England or Philadelphia might be the object of attack, and his troops must be disposed so as to move readily to the support of either.

Finding that General Howe was concentrating his whole available force at Brunswick, Washington began collecting his troops at Middlebrook, a very strong position about ten miles distant from the enemy. June 12, he ordered Putnam to send forward Generals Parsons, McDougall and Glover with all the Continental troops at Peekskill, except one thousand effective men, which, with the militia, were deemed sufficient to take care of the enemy east of the Hudson. These troops were "ordered to march in three divisions, each to follow one day's march behind the other, and each of the first two divisions to take with them two pieces of artillery."

On the 14th, Parsons writes to Washington from Peekskill:—"The part of my brigade present and able to march has crossed the river according to your Excellency's order received yesterday. They number one hundred. . . . It is not in my power to clothe them decently as I could wish. . . . They have no tents." He asks, "What shall be done with those who have not had the small pox."

On the night of the 13th, Howe extended his left to Somerset Court House, about nine miles, threatening our right, "the most accessible and weakest part of our line," but protecting himself from attack by keeping the Raritan River in his front. Here he remained until the night of the 19th, when he retreated somewhat precipitately to Brunswick, burning and plundering as he went. On Sunday, the 22d, he fell back to Amboy, General Greene, with three brigades, pursuing as far as Piscataway, the main army being drawn up on the Heights ready to support if occasion required. On the 24th, Washington, leaving his strong position in the hills, moved his whole army towards the enemy to Quibbletown. Perceiving this, Howe made a sudden lunge at his left with his entire force with the evident

intent of turning it, to avoid which Washington retired again to Middlebrook. The next day the enemy moved towards Samptown, our light troops in their rear and pursuing, and on the 30th, evacuated New Jersey.

The following letter from General Parsons to his wife, written in camp, June 22, while these movements were still in progress, may not be uninteresting:—

I have no way to tell you where I am, but by describing the place which has no name. Our camp is about two miles advanced in front of the mountain where the army is posted, on the road to Quibbletown, about one and a half miles north of that town, about two and one-half miles northwest of Samptown, about three miles west of Browestown, and about ten miles northwest of Spanktown, about eight miles northeast of Brunswick, six miles from Middlebrook, about one mile from the stream called Bound Brook, eastward, but further distant from the village of that name. If you can find me by this description, I shall be rejoiced to hear from you. I expect to remove from this place very soon. Our neighborhood with the enemy gives us frequent skirmishes, though nothing very material has occurred since the rascals retreated in so scandalous a manner from Somerset Court House to Brunswick. Their grand encampment seems now to be extended from Brunswick to Amboy. We are induced to believe they are embarking for some other place, and this State will be clear of them; however, this is at present not certain. I think their retreat must have an exceeding good effect in every point of view. If they advance to Millstone or Somerset to try the credit they may give their friends, and see what number will join them, they must be greatly mortified to find almost every man who had received his Majesty's protection and most gracious pardon in arms against them. Not the militia only of this State, but almost every man in it able to bear arms, have voluntarily flown to arms on this occasion. If they designed to penetrate the country to Philadelphia, they are convinced it is impracticable. If they designed to turn the flank of our army, and draw us from our strong grounds, they are disappointed.

The effect this maneuver will have on their army and our forces, and on the minds of the disaffected in the country, will probably be of great advantage to us. Our army is now respectable, but not such that we incline to attack them in their strongholds at present; especially as delay is considered as fatal to them, if we prevent their penetrating the country. The general is very well and in

good spirits; and our affairs have a more promising aspect than since the war began. Where their next movement will be is yet uncertain; perhaps, if I live, I may see you sooner than I expected when I left home. About one thousand of my brigade have joined us; more are expected every hour. Col. Butler and Major Sill are at Morristown; I expect they will soon have orders to join their brigades. Every necessary of life is exceedingly dear; salt is from ten to twenty dollars per bushel, and other things very extravagant. I am in very comfortable circumstances myself, though not very well.

Since writing the above, the enemy have evacuated Brunswick, with great precipitation and evident signs of fear, and are fled to Amboy. They left Brunswick at ten o'clock, and Gen. Greene took possession by the time they were out. They left a considerable quantity of flour and other things, but I have not seen the return yet. We pursued them, and attacked their rear and flank, to Amboy, where they are going aboard their ships. This State is once more delivered from those pests of society; who will next be infested with them, is uncertain, but we are in high spirits, and ready to march to any part of the country. I expect orders to march very soon, perhaps to the North River again, where I shall write you.

I am my dear with love to children,

Your affectionate husband,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

The very next day after the retreat from New Jersey, Washington received intelligence from General Schuyler, "that General Burgoyne is beginning to operate against Ticonderoga and its dependencies." Still in doubt as to the intentions of the enemy and anxious to provide against every contingency, he wrote Governor Trumbull in Connecticut on the 2d of July: —"If this movement is not a diversion but a serious attack, it is certain that the next step of General Howe's army will be towards Peekskill to get possession of the passes in the Highlands before this army can have time to form a junction with the troops already there. To guard against contingencies, I have ordered General Parsons' and General Varnum's brigades to march off with all dispatch towards Peekskill, and when they have arrived at or near that place, a reinforcement of four of the strongest Massachusetts regiments will proceed thence immediately to Albany on their way to Ticonderoga."

July 2, Parsons' and Varnum's brigades broke camp at Middlebrook and commenced their march to Peekskill, where they arrived about the 9th. July 15, while in camp at that Post, Parsons wrote to Washington at the request of Colonel Samuel B. Webb, a former aid-de-camp of his Excellency, who was apprehensive that he had fallen under Washington's displeasure, explaining and justifying his conduct. He assured him that Webb had been active and diligent in recruiting, and had never been guilty of idleness or dissipation, and that he and his officers, in his opinion, did as well as any could have done under the circumstances. This letter was probably called out by one from Washington to Colonel Webb, of June 7, in which he takes him severely to task for drawing five hundred suits of clothing for his regiment, when, by a return from General Parsons of May 13, it contained but two hundred and five men, rank and file. Webb seems to have placed his chief reliance on Parsons as his helper in time of trouble, and we frequently find Parsons interceding in his behalf. Their acquaintance began while Webb was acting as the secretary of Silas Deane, who, as well as Parsons, was a member of the Connecticut Committee of Correspondence.

July 16, 1777, Parsons writes Washington, "that General Prescott of the British army, who had just been captured at his home near Newport by Lieut. Colonel Barton of the Rhode Island militia, is to be taken to Windham in Connecticut, which is by no means a place of safety, as it would be easy for him to effect an escape to Long Island with the assistance of the dissaffected, and recommends that he be placed under the care of vigilant officers and be removed further from the Sound to some place where the people are generally well affected." The next day, Washington wrote Governor Trumbull repeating Parsons' recommendations, and asked the Governor to see that they were carried into effect.

On the 21st of July, Parsons and Huntington, with their brigades, marched towards the Sound to oppose the enemy should they attempt to land upon the coast. Nothing being heard of them, the troops returned to camp on the 27th.

The situation in the Highlands at this time was anything but inspiriting. The greater part of the force intended for

its defense had been sent to the assistance of Schuyler, or drawn by Washington to his own army for the defense of Philadelphia. Burgoyne's campaign was in full progress. On the 7th of July, he had captured Ticonderoga, and now, on the 30th, was at Fort Edward, less than sixty miles from Albany, with a perfectly equipped force of eight thousand men. St. Leger, operating from Oswego, was already near Fort Stanwix, (Rome, N. Y.) preparing to invest it with a thousand Indians and Tories. Sir Henry Clinton, from whom most was to be feared, was waiting with six thousand men in New York for an opportunity to form a junction with Burgoyne, seize the Posts in the Highlands and close the Hudson. "The importance of preventing this," wrote Washington to Putnam, on the 1st of August, "is infinite to America, and, in the present situation of things, every effort that can be thought of must be used." The responsibility of defending this vitally important position had been imposed on Putnam and Parsons, with no force at their command except Parsons' brigade of Continentals, about two thousand men, composed of the regiments of Wyllys, Charles Webb and Meigs, with the "additional regiments" of Samuel B. Webb and Sherburne. Under these trying circumstances, Parsons, ever on the alert and anxious for the safety of the important Posts in his charge, wrote to Washington, as follows:—

PEEKSKILL, *July 30th, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The designs of the enemy and the importance of the Posts in the various parts of the country, are doubtless better understood by your Excellency than I can pretend to know them. This ought not to prevent my proposing my sentiments to your Excellency's consideration; in this I do no more than my duty, and, if I am mistaken, it can be of no ill consequence to anyone but myself. The Posts on the North River have always appeared to me of greater importance to the enemy than any in America and the most difficult to obtain if any considerable body of men were left to defend them. In this light they have been generally viewed, as the communication between the Eastern and Southern States will be almost wholly cut off if the enemy hold the passes in or near the river. When I was last at Headquarters, it was thought of so much importance, that Gen. Nixon's brigade was ordered not to march for Albany until I should arrive within a day's march of Peekskill, when three brigades and the militia would have then been left at

the Post. If the Post is of so much importance to be held, and the intention of the enemy not fully known, it appears to me very necessary that a body of troops sufficient for the defense of it should be left here. The militia are to leave us to-morrow. Two brigades are ordered over the river for Philadelphia. About two thousand men are then left to defend the forts, man the ships and other commands and to defend the passes through the mountains, one thousand of which will be necessarily detached over the river and in the ships and to other Posts, the remaining number much too small to answer the expected purposes. That the enemy do not design to attack any other place at present I think most probable for these reasons: that no object can be of so much importance toward subjugating the country; and if a junction of Mr. Howe's army with that at the northward is an event they wish to take place, it can in no other way be so easily effected as by this river. The force left in and about York Island is certainly much larger than is necessary for the defense of New York. I think there can be no doubt but they have six thousand men left there, and unless this army is much greater than I conceive it to be, he cannot have, with the fleet, men sufficient to effect anything considerable against the force he would expect to meet at any other place southward of this Post. On these grounds I am still of opinion the enemy are designed here, and the present maneuver is to draw off our troops from this place. The difficulty of carrying the Post if a good body of troops were left here, I think will fully justify the maneuver of the enemy. They have never attempted to obstruct our passage over the river, which was always in their power. This I think strengthens the opinion they design to attack here. Under these circumstances I feel myself exceedingly concerned that so many of the troops are drawn to so great a distance. 'Tis not my own reputation only which gives me so much concern, though I am very sensible the little I have will be forever lost if the Post is not maintained, and I think the most sanguine person can have very little hope of it with no greater force than will remain here. With the four brigades and what assistance we can have from the militia there might be a prospect of maintaining it against the main body of the enemy until your Excellency's arrival here; otherwise I see very little prospect of holding out one day. However, I hope I may be mistaken in my conjecture; if I should be, I shall be heartily rejoiced. The two brigades should join you, and I wish I may be added to the number. I am your Excellency's obedient servant,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

To General Washington.

In August, 1777, Colonel Richard Hewlett, with two hundred and sixty Queens County Loyalists, had fortified himself in the Presbyterian Meeting House at Setauket, on the Long Island shore nearly opposite Fairfield and at the head of the little bay of that name. About the middle of the month, General Parsons prepared an expedition to surprise and capture this force. The following are the orders issued to him by General Putnam, the commander of the Connecticut Division:—

HEADQUARTERS, *August 16, 1777.*

You are hereby required to take under your command a detachment from the Continental Army and proceed to the sea coast near Fairfield and procure a number of boats to transport four or five hundred men, and such small armed or other vessels as you find necessary and proper.

You are to make a descent on Long Island and deplete and destroy such parties of the enemy as are found at Huntington and Setauket or other place on the Island, and, if you find it practicable without too great hazard, you are to retake and bring off all the officers and soldiers of the Continental Army now on Long Island.

If any military stores, magazines, provisions, forage or naval stores are found on the Island, you are to bring off or destroy them. You are to procure such information before you attempt to go on as will render the descent possible and the design practicable. If you find the position of the enemy on the Island or the ships in the Sound such as you judge will not facilitate the carrying the design into execution, you will not attempt it. This is left to your judgement. If that should be the case, you will return by way of White Plains and receive further orders. You will take such men from the militia or the troops necessary for the defense of the State of Connecticut, in addition to the Continental troops, found necessary, and also a field piece. From the sea coast you will be careful to secure the return of your men to the Main in such manner and from such place as you judge most effectual after having effected the business you were sent to perform.

Wishing you success, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

Parsons' orders of August 16, to Colonel Samuel B. Webb of his brigade, were as follows:—

SIR.—You will have your command paraded in the street in front

of Colonel Wyllys' regiment at 12 o'clock, provided with arms, thirty rounds of ammunition and three days' provisions, and march them to Crompond where you will open the enclosed, which will give you further directions. This you will communicate to no one until you march forward.

Yr. humble serv't,

To Colonel Samuel B. Webb. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Parsons took with him on this expedition about five hundred men and several pieces of brass cannon. On the 21st, soon after his arrival at Fairfield, he issued the following general order to his troops prescribing the conduct to be observed by them on the march:—

FAIRFIELD, *August 21, 1777.*

Orders of Brigadier General Parsons:

On the present expedition, 'tis of the first importance to the success of the enterprise and the credit, honor and safety of the troops, that the most exact order and discipline be observed, and the honor of our arms and the righteousness of our contest will be made manifest to the world and our enemies by the regular and orderly behavior of the officers and soldiers. 'Tis not from base and mercenary motives, 'tis not to distress the helpless women or honest citizen we draw our swords, but from the noble and generous principle of maintaining the right of humanity and vindicating the liberties of freemen. The officers and soldiers are therefore most earnestly exhorted and strictly commanded to forbear all violation of personal property; not the least article is to be taken but by orders; we are to convince our enemies we despise their practices and scorn to follow their example. But should any person be so lost to all virtue and honor as to infringe this order, he or they may depend on the most exemplary punishment.

No officer is to suffer a soldier to leave his ranks on any pretence whatever and the greatest silence on the march is to be observed.

SAML. H. PARSONS.

Landing on Crane's Neck very early in the morning, General Parsons demanded the surrender of the Post; but "by means of some infernal Tory," says the Boston Gazette, "which shows how much we suffer from internal foes who get knowledge of our most secret moments and find means to convey it to the enemy." Hewlett had obtained intelligence of the intended surprise, and protected the church so effectively by breastworks

six feet high, thrown up thirty feet from the building, in which were mounted four swivel guns, that, with the means at hand, the Post was practically impregnable. The enemy refusing to surrender, Parsons opened on them with his guns, but failing to make any considerable impression, and fearing that the British fleet on the Sound might be attracted by the firing, he withdrew, not, however, without capturing a quantity of blankets and twelve or thirteen horses belonging to the British, and returned to Connecticut the next day in safety.

At Norwalk upon his return, General Parsons issued the following further order to Colonel Webb:—

NORWALK, *August 29, 1777.*

You are to proceed with the detachment under your command to Horseneck or Sawpits, as you think safe and convenient for securing your boats, protecting the country and carrying into execution the designs the detachment was sent out for. Take care that the whale boats are kept under a good guard. When they are not in use, you will send parties to Hempstead Harbor, Great Neck or such other parts of Long Island as you find safe, to destroy the forage and other things collected for the enemy's use . . . Every method you can devise to deceive the enemy and blind the people, may be advisable to pursue."

S. H. PARSONS.

To Col. Samuel B. Webb.

Along the Connecticut shore from Rye to Norwalk, and especially in the vicinity of Horseneck and Saw Pits (Greenwich and Port Chester), were numerous shallow inlets where were concealed during the war large numbers of whale boats, usually thirty feet long, fitted with from four to twenty oars and very fast, which were employed in raids upon the enemy on Long Island, both by the inhabitants and the military authorities. Darting across the Sound under cover of night or during a dense fog, and running into inlets on the southern shore, they would harass and annoy the enemy, sometimes plundering, sometimes taking prisoners, occasionally cutting out small vessels and often destroying large quantities of forage and stores collected for the use of the enemy.

The day Webb received his orders to march to Crompond,

the battle of Bennington was fought, so disastrous to Burgoyne. On the 22d, while Parsons was at or near Setauket, St. Leger, abandoning the siege of Fort Stanwix, retreated to Canada. On the same day, Washington received the news which relieved him of all doubt as to the intentions of the enemy and determined his future movements, the news that Howe's fleet was anchored in Chesapeake Bay. From this on events followed in rapid succession.

On the 22d of August, Howe disembarked his army, and by the 23d of September, Cornwallis' and Knyphausen's Divisions were on their march to Philadelphia. Our army having advanced beyond the Brandywine to within a few miles of Wilmington, Howe pushed forward thinking to turn the American right and gain their rear; but Washington, divining his purpose, crossed the river in the night, and taking position on the high ground above Chad's Ford, still barred Howe's road to the north.

Leaving Knyphausen to make a feint of attacking the American left at Chad's Ford, which was commanded by Washington in person, Howe, with Cornwallis' division, crossed the Brandywine at an unguarded ford seven miles higher up the river, and fell upon the right wing under Sullivan before he had time to form, throwing his troops into confusion and causing a precipitate retreat through the woods in his rear; but Washington, hastening to his support, was able to check the pursuit. In the meanwhile, Knyphausen, knowing by the firing that Cornwallis was engaged, crossed at Chad's Ford and attacked the American intrenchments in earnest. These were strongly held by Wayne's Division, and for some time the contest was warm and well sustained. During the night the whole army retreated to Chester and the next day to Germantown.

Three weeks after this, on the 4th of October, the battle of Germantown was fought, in which the Americans nearly gained a complete victory, and failed only because a dense fog which prevailed prevented their seeing the confusion of the enemy and the decided advantage they had gained. In each of these battles the American loss was nearly one-third greater than that of the British. In November, both armies prepared to go into

winter quarters, Howe in Philadelphia, and Washington at White Marsh, fourteen miles from Philadelphia.

While events in Pennsylvania were resulting so favorably for Howe, the outlook in the north for Burgoyne had become very dark and depressing. His army was disheartened by the failure of St. Leger's expedition and the disaster at Bennington. Lincoln, in his rear with two thousand men, had cut off his communications with Canada, taken possession of several Posts, threatened Ticonderoga and destroyed two hundred vessels, all important to Burgoyne were he forced to retreat. With no alternative but to fight or surrender, on the morning of the 19th of September, he moved out of his fortified camp on the Heights of Saratoga towards Bemis Heights, where Gates was encamped, and offered battle. The severe engagement which ensued was terminated only by darkness, both armies claiming the victory and both sleeping on their arms upon the field. It was a soldier's battle on the American side, no general officer except Arnold and Learned appearing during the action. The next day Burgoyne fell back to the high grounds two miles north of the American lines. Here he remained for more than two weeks, cheered only by the news of Howe's victory on the Brandywine, awaiting the promised aid from Clinton. Hearing nothing from him, he called a council of officers on the eve of the 4th of October, the very day that Germantown was fought and that Clinton began his movement up the Hudson, at which it was decided, as a last desperate resort, to again attack the American camp. Advancing with his entire force on the morning of the 7th, the two armies became almost immediately engaged. The fighting was fierce and determined on both sides and continued with little intermission until night, ending with the complete rout of the Germans and the retreat of the British a mile beyond their intrenchments. Ten days after, destitute of provisions, unable to advance or retreat, with no tidings from Clinton (for the spy who bore a message from him enclosed in a silver bullet had been captured and hanged), Burgoyne, on the 17th of October, surrendered his whole army prisoners of war.

CHAPTER XII

PARSONS AT WHITE PLAINS. PUTNAM PLANS TO ATTACK NEW YORK. CLINTON, REINFORCED, ATTEMPTS TO RELIEVE BURGOYNE. CAPTURES THE POSTS ON THE HUDSON. PARSONS FORWARDS REINFORCEMENTS FROM CONNECTICUT. JAMES DELANCEY A PRISONER. TRYON BURNS PHILLIPS MANOR. THE PARSONS-TRYON CORRESPONDENCE.

September—December, 1777

UPON his return from the expedition to Setauket, General Parsons, by Putnam's orders, went into camp with his brigade at White Plains. "By being there," as Putnam wrote Washington from his Headquarters at Peekskill, September 16, "he answers a double purpose—to protect that part of the country from the incursions of the enemy, and he is, in my opinion, equally, or a greater security to this Post than if they laid here, as he is under advantages to learn their first movements." He was also in a convenient position, a fact to which Washington's attention was not called, to aid in carrying out a plan Putnam had formed for making a simultaneous attack on the enemy at Staten Island, Paulus Hook, York Island and Long Island. This plan was favored by Governor Trumbull, who had encouraged expectations of large reinforcements of Connecticut militia, which, with the Continental troops under his command and the assistance he might procure from New York and New Jersey, Putnam believed would enable him to execute his design. Anticipating an early movement, he obtained through General Parsons accurate information of the strength and disposition of the enemy's force and the location and armament of their Works, as appears from the following letter:—

WHITE PLAINS, *September 20, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I find General Clinton returned from Jersey last Tuesday, and brought about 200 head of cattle and some horses.

The 35th and 57th Regiments of British troops, one Battalion of Hessians, consisting of three or four regiments, two regiments of DeLancey's Brigade, Brown's Corps, Fanning's Regiment and the York volunteers, are encamped on the hill between Kingsbridge and Fort Washington; Robinson's Regiment and Hierlehy's Independent Companies at Morrisania. A picket of fifty men in each Redoubt on this side of the Bridge is all their Horse except a detachment from the new Corps of Rangers armed with rifles, about 500 in number, and the Light Horse.

The Redoubts are in a line from Fort Independence to the hill a little N. Westerly of Richard Morris' house. They are strongly abutted and have a ditch without and horizontal pickets projecting over the ditch. In the southernmost Redoubt are two twelve pounders; in the next to that are four embrasures, but no cannon mounted; in each Redoubt, one cohorn.

The return of General Clinton before we could march to the Bridge after notice of the enemy's march, has hitherto prevented any attempt that way. 'Tis by the Field Officers thought advisable to rest a few days till their present alarm has a little subsided. The speedy return of the enemy from Jersey, I am informed was occasioned by information Mr. Clinton received that General Putnam was moving down in force to attack the Posts at the Bridge.

This is the best account I am yet able to procure of the enemy's strength at the Bridge. There are also some foreign troops at Fort Washington and on Tippet's Hill not included before, and also the 7th and 63d British at Harlem. The Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the British regiments were completed to fifty men and went with the main Army.

I have two deserters, one Green Coat and one British soldier, who will soon be sent up. This moment another British deserter has come in. He says a reinforcement of 5000 men are expected every day, when General Clinton proposes to attack the Posts in the Highlands.

I am, Sir, yr. obedt. servt.,

To Major General Putnam. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Putnam's project, however, very much to his disappointment, was put an end to for the time, by Washington's order "to detach as many effective rank and file as will make the whole number, including those with General McDougall, amount to twenty-five hundred privates and non-commissioned officers

fit for duty." These troops were undoubtedly sadly needed in Washington's Army, but it soon became evident that the detachment of so large a body had endangered the defense of the Highlands. On the 27th, Putnam wrote Colonel Malcom "to join Parsons brigade which he had ordered up from White Plains."

Late in September, the reinforcement referred to in Parsons' letter, which Sir Henry Clinton had so long and so impatiently waited for, arriving in New York after a three months' voyage. Early intelligence of this was obtained by Parsons, probably through the same spies who had furnished the information as to the strength and disposition of the enemy, and promptly communicated to Putnam in the following letter:—

WHITE PLAINS, *September 26, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I have a large party just returned from East Chester, from whence they crossed through "Mile Square" to Phillip's, with small parties advanced against the enemy; by them and in a variety of other ways, I learn the enemy design an excursion into the country, probably as far as Croton River, their object being to clear the country of cattle &c. Yesterday, they had a Field Day, at which all the militia of Westchester were obliged to attend. They have ordered their bakers to work day and night to prepare hard bread for the purpose. 'Tis also said the ships are to go up the River to receive troops if necessary. Colonel Byard with his regiment, came over from Powle's Hook yesterday, and two deserters who came in this morning, say they understood the Post was evacuated. By every circumstance I can find, I think they will be out of this business very soon, perhaps in a day or two. I ought not to forget to mention that the enemy have a considerable number of Horse.

27th.—I have this moment received accounts by Mr. Fanning from New York, that sixty ships arrived the day before yesterday with recruits. He says he judges by the best intelligence he can get, they amount to three thousand and upwards, British and German troops; this perhaps may alter the face of affairs and perhaps may enable them to make a real attack on the North River Posts.

I am yours &c.,

To General Putnam. S. H. PARSONS.

This information was communicated by Putnam to Governor

Clinton, who reported his action thereon to Washington in the following letter:—

NEW WINDSOR, *October 9, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I have to inform you, that, in consequence of intelligence received by General Putnam from General Parsons [who lay with his brigade at White Plains] of the enemy having received a reinforcement from Europe at New York, and that by their movements there was reason to believe they intended an attack on Peekskill, and to possess themselves of the passes in the Highlands, the General immediately wrote to me these circumstances; and to prevent if possible the disagreeable consequences that might arise if the army at the different posts was not timely reinforced, I ordered that part of the militia of the State that had not already marched northward, to move, and part of them to join General Putnam, and the remainder to reinforce the Posts of Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton; but it being a critical time with the Yeomanry, as they had not yet sown their grain, and there being at that time no appearance of the enemy, they were extremely restless and uneasy. They solicited General Putnam for leave to return, and many of them went home without his permission. Urged by these considerations, he thought proper to dismiss a part of them. . . .

The easy-going ways of Putnam were evidently not pleasing to the Governor, for he immediately called out one-half of the militia, to be relieved by the other half at the end of a month. But before he was able to strengthen his posts, Sir Henry Clinton had commenced his predicted movement. On the morning of the 4th of October, he set sail up the Hudson with three or four thousand men, and, on the 5th, landed at Verplancks Point, a few miles below Peekskill, threatening that Post. On the sixth, under cover of a dense fog, he crossed the River with some two thousand men, and, after a sharp fight, captured Forts Clinton and Montgomery, commanded by the Governor and his brother, General James Clinton, both of whom were fortunate enough to escape, though the latter was badly wounded. What happened on the 6th on the east side of the River, Putnam details in a letter to Washington written from Fishkill on the 8th:—

The morning being so exceedingly foggy, the pickets and scouts which we had out, could not learn the exact number of the enemy

that were remaining on the east side of the river; but from the best accounts, they were about fifteen hundred. At the same time a number of ships and galleys with about forty flat boats, made every appearance of their intention to land troops both at Fort Independence and Peekskill Landing. These circumstances, and my strength, being not more than twelve hundred Continental troops and three hundred militia, prevented me from detaching a party to attack the enemy that day on the east side of the river.

After we had thought it impracticable to quit the heights, which we had then possession of, and attack the enemy, Brigadier General Parsons and myself went to reconnoiter the ground near the enemy; and on our return from thence we were alarmed with a very heavy and hot firing, both of small arms and of cannon, at Fort Montgomery, which immediately convinced me that the enemy had landed a large body of men in the morning on the west side of the river. Upon which I immediately detached five hundred men to reinforce the garrison; but before they could possibly cross the river to their assistance, the enemy, far superior in numbers, had possessed themselves of the Fort. . . . Governor Clinton arrived at Peekskill the same evening about eleven o'clock, and with the advice of him, General Parsons and several other officers, it was thought impossible to maintain the post at Peekskill with the force then present against one that the enemy might in a few hours bring on the heights in our rear. It was therefore agreed, that the stores ought to be immediately removed to some secure place, and the troops take post at Fishkill until a reinforcement of militia shall come to their aid.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. ISRAEL PUTNAM.

The next morning, October 7th, General Parsons hastened to Danbury, thirty miles distant, to hurry forward the troops coming to Putnam's assistance. Reaching Danbury the same day, Parsons writes to Governor Trumbull as to the prospect for reinforcements and gives him an account of the attack on Fort Montgomery. On the 9th, having joined Putnam at Peekskill, he again writes Trumbull, advising him that the enemy are advancing, and urging the absolute necessity of all who can bear arms marching immediately to Poughkeepsie, and the importance of defeating Clinton before he reaches Albany. The following are the two letters to Trumbull of the 7th and 9th:—

DANBURY, *October 7th 1777.*

SIR.—I came this morning to forward with all possible expedition, such troops as I should find coming to our aid from Connecticut. I am much pleased to find my countrymen seem again roused from the stupor which had seized them. I think by appearances that we shall soon receive a reinforcement of two thousand men from this State. Happy would I have been had the fourth of this body arrived yesterday.

I am sorry to inform your Excellency that the enemy made a successful attack on Fort Montgomery yesterday. The 5th, they landed about fifteen hundred men at King's Ferry, on the east side of the river, under cover of their ships and armed vessels, and the night after re-embarked most of them, which, with a large additional number (about twenty-five hundred in the whole) were landed on the west side (the 6th) in the morning, keeping a large reserve on board at King's Ferry.

About ten o'clock the enemy began to attack the Fort, which lasted without cessation until nearly half past six in the evening, when the Fort was carried by storm after eight or ten unsuccessful attempts, in which they were repulsed with great loss. The courage and bravery displayed by the troops (principally militia from New York) who defended the Post, would do honor to the best disciplined regiments. No terms would be accepted, but with fortitude seldom found, they undauntedly stood the shock, determined to defend the Fort or sell their lives as dear as possible. The Fort was finally taken, merely for want of men to man the lines, and not for want of spirit in the men. But about five hundred was afforded to man the Post and outworks belonging to them, a number of men not more than sufficient to defend the largest Fort. The Post on the east side was left in a weak, defenseless state, and could afford but little aid.

Thus was a Post of importance, and the lives and liberties of some of the bravest men, made a sacrifice to the careless inattention of our countrymen to objects of great and extensive public importance. The enemy must have suffered much, as for more than three hours of this attack the musketry was incessant within forty yards, and less a greater part of the time. Gov. Clinton, who commanded, and Col. Lamb and some other officers, escaped after the enemy had entered. Gen. James Clinton was wounded and is a prisoner. Maj. Humphrey, Col. Dubois, Lieut. Col. Livingston and sundry other officers are missing.

This event is unfortunate, but I hope will not be attended by any very ill consequences. I think a little more patience and public

virtue, (which is now very scarce,) will set all things right again.

I am, with esteem, your Excellency's obedient servant,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

To Governor Trumbull.

PEEKSKILL, *October 9th 1777.*

SIR.—I wrote yesterday from Danbury an account of the misfortune which had befallen this Post merely for the want of a timely reinforcement of men sufficient to man the lines. On that head I can only add, that should this misfortune have the happy effect to rouse my countrymen to more vigorous exertions, and to the exercise of a degree of patience, submission and perseverance necessary to accomplish anything great, or save the country from inevitable ruin, we may consider the event as fortunate, rather than as an event from which any ill effects will follow.

Gov. Clinton, his brother, Gen. James Clinton, Col. Lamb, Maj. Humphrey and most of the officers and a great part of the men who were supposed to be lost, have got in, many of them badly wounded. The garrison was defended with the utmost bravery: no men could do more. Our loss cannot yet be ascertained: I hope not so considerable as we feared. The army of the enemy are now advancing. We have no doubt Albany is their object. Should they attack this Post, from which they are seven miles distant, and the same spirit of inattention seize our countrymen, I fear you will hear no better news from here. We shall fight the enemy if possible. We shall do our utmost to defend ourselves if attacked. The troops are in good spirits. The issue is in the disposal of the great Arbiter of all events. I think it of absolute necessity that all who can bear arms and can be spared, should be immediately sent forward to Poughkeepsie, except those on their march for this Post, who will join us here.

Gen. Clinton, who commands the British forces in person, must be defeated at Albany, or before he arrives there, or Gen. Gates will be undone. Every exertion is necessary to animate and encourage the people in this important crisis. That we are embarked in the cause of justice and truth—in the cause of God and mankind—is beyond a doubt. That we shall finally succeed, I think equally certain. When public spirit prevails over private interest—and injustice (so scandalously prevalent at this time) is restrained, and religion and virtue and a sense of our dependence on Heaven for all our mercies, and especially deliverance from imminent danger, takes the place of vain confidence in our own arm and on our own strength, then and not till then, will our salvation be brought

out; but I cannot say that a profound belief of these things, and a careless neglect of using the means put into our hands for our own deliverance, is any evidence of the sincerity of our profession.

As Gen. Putnam is exceedingly busy, I have wrote by his desire.

I have the honor to be

Your Excellency's obedient servant

To Governor Trumbull. SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

On the first of October, Putnam had not to exceed two thousand men in the Highlands with which to defend Forts Clinton and Montgomery, Independence and Constitution, the Posts of Peekskill and Fishkill and the mountain passes. Clinton's force was not only twice as large, but, being on transports, could be landed when and where he chose and accomplish his purpose before Putnam could possibly concentrate troops enough to prevent him. Almost without effort he was able to reduce the forts, the effect of which was, as Washington, on the 8th, wrote to Governor Livingston would be the case, "to open the navigation of the River and enable the enemy with facility to throw their forces into Albany, get into the rear of General Gates and either oblige him to retreat, or put him between two fires." Had Clinton moved ten days earlier, Burgoyne's campaign might have had a different ending, but the chances are that if the troops assigned to the defense of the Highlands had not been ordered south, the movement up the River would never have been attempted. His reasons for withdrawing the troops, Washington gives in his answer to Governor Clinton's letter of the 9th:—"Nothing," he says, "but an absolute necessity could have induced me to withdraw any further part of the troops allotted for the defence of the Posts up the North River; but such was the reduced state of our Continental regiments after the battle of Brandywine, and such the difficulty of procuring reinforcements of militia from the southward, that without the troops from Peekskill, we should scarcely have been able to keep the field against General Howe. I had the greatest hopes that General Putnam would draw in as many Connecticut militia as would replace the Continental troops, and I make no doubt that he did all in his power to obtain them in time." In his order to Putnam of September 23, withdrawing these troops, Washington had said:—"It is

our first object to defeat, if possible, the army now opposed to us here. That the passes in the Highlands may be perfectly secure, you will immediately call in all your forces now on command at outposts. You must not think of covering a whole country by dividing them; and when they are ordered in and drawn together, they will be fully competent to repel any attempt that can be made by the enemy from below in their present situation." The Connecticutt militia had been reserved for this very purpose, Massachusetts men having been used to reinforce Gates, but the difficulty was to obtain them in time. An emergency would come and go before they could be assembled, and therein was the danger of depending on them for the defense of the important posts of the Highlands. Parsons secured two thousand militia on the 7th, but "happy would he have been had the fourth of this body arrived the day before."

The Highlands could have been defended against Howe as well in Pennsylvania as on the Hudson, but not against Clinton. To reinforce the depleted regiments of Washington at the expense of the Highlands, would seem to have been a dangerous expedient at the best, and not to be resorted to merely to prevent the capture of Philadelphia—a place of no strategic value to either side—when it would have invited attack on the most vital point in the whole confederacy, endangered the control of the Hudson and imperiled the communications between New England and the other States, the severing of which meant little less than the utter collapse of the revolution. As it turned out, it was not in the Highlands, but at Saratoga, that the control of the Hudson was secured. Burgoyne's defeat on the 7th, and his subsequent surrender, garrisoned the Highland posts more strongly than the whole army could have done, drove Clinton back to New York and ended the last attempt of the British to obtain possession of the river by arms.

On the morning of the 7th of October, after breaking the boom across the river, Clinton's whole force of thirty-six hundred men under the command of General Vaughn, sailed up the Hudson, with the object of creating a diversion in favor of Burgoyne and preventing the militia from joining Gates. They took Fort Constitution on the way, destroyed every vessel

found on the river and fired into many country seats along the shores. On the 13th, they burned Kingston, then the capital of the State. Continuing up the river to Livingston Manor, they were there arrested in the midst of their work of destruction by the news of Burgoyne's surrender, and made a hasty retreat towards New York.

After the conference on the night of the sixth, following the capture of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, General Putnam, as advised by Governor Clinton, General Parsons and other officers, withdrew from Peekskill and established his headquarters at Fishkill, just north of the Highlands. Three days later, October 9, General Tryon was detached with Emmerick's Chasseurs and other German troops, to destroy Continental village, near the southern entrance of the Highlands, where a few months before barracks had been constructed capable of accommodating two thousand men. This he accomplished effectually. The barracks and nearly every house in the village, together with the public stores, were consumed and many cattle slaughtered.

After reinforcement by the Connecticut militia, Putnam reported to General Washington as follows:

FISHKILL, *October 16th 1777.*

SIR.—Last Monday, the thirteenth, General Parsons with about two thousand troops, marched down and took possession of Peekskill and the passes in the Highlands. He has taken a number of cattle, horses and sheep which were collected by the enemy. They had burned the buildings and barracks at Continental village and several dwellings and other buildings at Peekskill. They have demolished Forts Montgomery and Constitution and are repairing Fort Clinton. Yesterday about forty sail passed up the River crowded with troops, and are anchored at Poughkeepsie, the wind not favoring. We were on our march after them, when I met the agreeable intelligence of the surrender of General Burgoyne and his army as prisoners of war, a copy of which is enclosed. I thereupon most sincerely congratulate your Excellency. I have halted my troops and am now considering what ought to be my movement. I have sent to Governor Clinton for his opinion and ordered General Parsons to spare no pains to find out the situation at Kingsbridge in order to direct my future operations advantageously. I have about six thousand troops who are chiefly militia.

Fishkill, October 18, 1777, Lieut. Colonel Oswald writing to Colonel Lamb of the artillery, says:

General Parsons is at Peekskill. This morning "Old Put" came and ordered me to send off Capt. Lockwood with his two pieces to join him; and I am told we are all to go down to White Plains. This morning General Parsons sent intelligence that Clinton had been reinforced from New York and is determined to push up the River.

The reinforcement referred to is probably the "forty sail" mentioned in Putnam's report. While General Parsons was at Peekskill, the enemy, on their way down the river, landed at Verplancks Point. Discovering that Parsons was preparing to attack, they re-embarked precipitately and thus thwarted his design, as appears from the following letter from him to Governor Trumbull:

PEEKSKILL, *October 22d, 1777.*

SIR.—The enemy prevented our designed attack upon them by a very sudden embarkation of their troops on board their ships, which still lie off Verplancks Point. Every favorable opportunity has offered for their going to New York, but no movements have taken place. Their Northern Army is more within your Excellency's knowledge than mine. If we should soon be ordered toward New York, I think some aid from Connecticut will be much wanted. As I understand, fourteen hundred men are ordered from the east side of the Connecticut River to join Gen. Gates; under his present situation would it not be best to order them to join this part of the army as soon as possible.

The militia from this post are all returned home.

I am your Excellency's obedient servant,

S. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Trumbull.

On the 26th of October, Forts Montgomery and Clinton were evacuated, and the same day, the British fleet left for New York with all their transports and troops. To Putnam's letter reporting this, Washington replied, November 4, expressing his satisfaction at the enemy's retreat, and saying that "by their doing this and sending a reinforcement to General Howe, it is evident that they have done with all

thoughts of attempting anything further to the northward. Having lost one army, it is certainly their interest and intention to make the other as respectable as possible, and, as now their force is nearly drawn together at one point, Philadelphia, it is undoubtedly our plan to endeavor to destroy General Howe."

The same day Washington wrote to General Dickinson in New Jersey, who, like Putnam, was planning to threaten New York in order to prevent reinforcements going to Howe:—

Your idea of counteracting the reinforcements for Howe's army by a demonstration of designs on New York, I think an exceeding good one, and am very desirous that you should improve and mature it for immediate execution. A great show of preparations on your part, boats collected, troops assembled, your expectation of the approach of Generals Gates and Putnam intrusted as a secret to persons who you are sure will divulge and disseminate it in New York; in a word, such measures taken for effectually striking an alarm into that city, as it is altogether unnecessary for me minutely to describe to you, I am in great hopes will effect the valuable purpose you expect.

General Parsons, ordered to White Plains presumably with reference to Putnam's contemplated movement against New York, writes on the 27th to Colonel Webb that he is "glad to be relieved from staying longer at Peekskill and wants nothing more than to be with his brigade and have Webb with him." November 3, Webb received orders to join the brigade, but after a few days his regiment was ordered to the coast and went into camp on Kingstreet, near Horseneck. The following extracts from Webb's diary, as given in his Life and Letters, edited by Worthington C. Ford, are interesting as showing Parsons' movements during the month while preparations were in progress against New York:

Horseneck, Wednesday, Nov. 5. Arrived here from Stamford about 9 A. M.; found General Parsons quartered at Knapp's.

Nov. 14, 1777. Quarters between Mamaroneck and White Plains. Returned from Horseneck with General Parsons and dined at my Quarters; preparing for a march.

Sunday, Nov. 16. Rode with General Parsons to Horseneck.

Wednesday, Nov. 19. This forenoon rode to Mamaroneck, and from thence to White Plains in company with Maj. Gen. Putnam and Brigadier Parsons. Every movement indicates something speedily to be done.

Rye, Nov. 21. This being Thanksgiving Day, rode with Gen. Parsons, Major Huntington and Captain Bull to Knapp's in Horseneck.

Rye, Nov. 21. Note from Gen. Parsons that he had received information that the enemy intended to burn Tarrytown, and to have regiment ready to march on shortest notice.

Saturday, Nov. 29. Last night scouting party went down to West Chester and made prisoner of Col. James DeLancey [later of the Refugee Corps] and several others.

Nov. 30. With Brigadier Parsons rode to Horseneck.

Dec. 2. Horseneck. With Gen. Parsons and Col. DeLancey, dined at Mr. Bushes.

Dec. 3. At one P. M., Brigadier Parsons and myself set forward and arrived at Norwalk about dusk.

Colonel DeLancey, even at this time, seems to have been in bad odor with the people of Westchester, for the Committee of Safety of that County, in the following curious petition, proceeded immediately upon his arrest to denounce him as a Tory and demand his close confinement:—

To His Excellency, George Clinton, Governor of the State of New York, General of the Militia and Admiral of the Navy of the same:

May it please Your Excellency, the Committee of Safety for Westchester County, Humbly showeth:—that, whereas James DeLancey of this County, soon after the enemy got possession of New York, gave his parole to one of our general officers that he would abide by the country in the present war with Great Britain and continue at his own house, but within a week after, he, with both his brothers, went on board of the men-of-war in the East River and went to New York, and soon after came back with the enemy to West Chester, and has been there ever since, acting with the greatest venom imaginable against the good people of this County, as a Colonel commanding the militia in that end of the County, and as a captain in raising a company of Light Horse, encouraging a number of horse thieves to steal horses for said company in the northern parts of said County; and several times he has

been known to be in person with said thieves and plunderers up in the County; all of which unspeakable miseries and distresses this County has suffered for ten months last past by such robbers, has been owing to his conduct. But a few days past, he was taken at West Chester by a party of Continental troops and carried to General Putnam, and by him sent on his parole to remain at Hartford.

We, the above said Committee, in behalf of the distressed people of Westchester County, humbly beg your Excellency would interpose with General Putnam, that said parole may be taken away, and he be put into close confinement, so that the law may have its proper course against such a traitor to this State in particular and the whole United States in general, as he has proven himself to be.

And in the meantime your Petitioners will ever pray that God, by his almighty power, preserve and direct your Excellency in your public administration in this so difficult a time.

Signed by order of the Committee

WESTCHESTER CO. *Dec. 6, 1777* AB'M. LEGGETT, *Chairman.*

In a letter to General Putnam, dated Poughkeepsie, December 12, 1777, complaining of the bad treatment which our soldiers, prisoners of war, received at the hands of the British, Governor Clinton, referring to this petition, wrote:— "I am informed that a party of yours were fortunate enough to capture Colonel James DeLancey. This gentleman, I am informed, has broken his parole once already. I am persuaded you wont put it in his power to do it a second time." It does not appear, however, that DeLancey was ever placed in close confinement, for Parsons, in a letter to Governor Clinton, dated, Robinsons, February 21, 1778, mentions that he "has returned agreeable to his parole." In this case the vision of his enemies was keener than that of his friends. Could even the easy-going Putnam have foreseen the ruin and distress which this merciless raider brought upon Westchester County and western Connecticut and the efforts necessary to break up and capture his cow-boy band, DeLancey would not have escaped as easily as he did.

The following is from General Putnam to General Parsons:—

HEADQUARTERS, SAWPITS, *December 20, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I wrote you the other day and informed you that I had orders from General Washington to return all the troops

to Fishkill and fortify the River at all events. As he is of this opinion, the object of obstructing the River far supercedes all other events.

These orders from the General I should imagine would put an end to your plan of keeping a body of men on the Island this winter, and makes it absolutely necessary for us to cross to the main immediately. However, as you must be better acquainted with that country than I am, I have no objections, if you think proper, to leaving fifty or one hundred men there under a good officer. I would have all Continental troops with you. Join me as soon as possible. I leave the raising of a number of refugees entirely to you, but I think the troops will all go from here as it will be too hazardous to trust them. I am &c.,

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

P. S.—Dr. Burnett informs me that Governor Livingston has just received a letter from Congress assuring him that they had not the least doubt that the French had declared against Great Britain and that five thousand troops were ordered to Martinico.

On the 26th, Parsons wrote from Hartford to Governor Clinton of New York, suggesting a way in which he might effect the exchange of his neighbor, Colonel Allison:—

HARTFORD, *December 26, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—Finding Mr. Thompson here anxiously concerned to procure the exchange of your neighbor, Col. Allison, for one Col. Barton, I thought it might not be amiss to suggest to you that, although the cartel is yet suspended and therefore no negotiations can be by the General on this subject, yet the Governors of particular States have in several instances undertaken to exchange in their own names; perhaps this may be effected in that way. I hope to see you in camp. I am &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Clinton.

While Parsons' brigade was stationed at White Plains, General Tryon, whose military specialty seems to have been to burn and destroy, sent out, on the 18th of November, a small force of Hessian troops under Captain Emmerick—the same officer sent to destroy Continental village—to burn the houses in Phillips' Manor, near the Hudson. This affair was marked by circumstances of such savage barbarity, that Parsons'

indignation was fired to white heat. The correspondence between him and Tryon to which this outrage gave rise, is given in full as showing the energetic character and bold, fervid, earnest patriotism which distinguished General Parsons. The occasion for the correspondence appears more fully in the following letter from Parsons to Mr. Laurens, then President of Congress:—

To the Hon. Mr. Laurens, President of Congress:

Sir.—On the 18th ult. (November), Gen. Tryon sent about one hundred men under the command of Capt. Emmerick to burn some houses within about four miles of my guards, which, under cover of a dark night, he effected with circumstances of most savage barbarity, stripping the clothing from women and children and turning them almost naked into the street in a most severe night; the men were made prisoners and led with halters about their necks, with no other clothes than their shirts and breeches in triumph to the enemy's lines. This conduct induced me to write to Gen. Tryon upon the subject; a copy of my letter and his answer I have herewith sent you. As the practice of desolating villages, burning houses and every species of unnecessary distress to the inhabitants ought to be avoided, I would not wish to retaliate in any instance but where in its consequences the enemy may be injured or one of our people saved by it. I am aware if in any instance this shall be done, I shall subject myself to censure unless it is in consequence of some general order of Congress by which I may be warranted. As these instances may be frequently repeated by the enemy, I wish to know in what, or whether in any instance, Congress will direct a retaliation. I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

Samuel H. Parsons.

Parsons' letter to Tryon and Tryon's reply, mentioned in the letter to Mr. Laurens, are as follows:—

Mamaroneck, *Nov. 21st, 1777.*

Sir.—Adding to the natural horrors of war, the most wanton destruction of private property, are acts of cruelty unknown to civilized nations, and unaccustomed in war until the servants of the King of Great Britain have convinced the impartial world, no acts of inhumanity, no stretch of despotism are too great for them to exercise towards those they are pleased to term rebels. Had any apparent advantage been derived from burning the houses on Phil-

lips Manor last Monday night, there would have been some appearance of reason to justify the measure, but when no benefit can result from destroying those buildings and stripping the women and children of necessary apparel to cover them from the severity of a cold night, and leading off the captivated heads of those families in triumph to your lines in a most ignominious manner, I cannot assign a justifiable cause for this act of cruelty; nor can I conceive a reason for your further order to destroy Tarrytown.

'Tis not my inclination, Sir, to war in this manner against the inhabitants within your lines who suppose themselves within the protection of the King. But necessity will oblige me to retaliate in kind upon your friends, to compel the exercise of that justice which humanity used to dictate, unless your explicit disavowal of the conduct of your Captains Emmerick and Barns shall convince me those houses were destroyed without your knowledge and against your order. You cannot be insensible 'tis every day in my power to destroy the buildings belonging to Col. Phillips and Mr. Delancey; each as near your lines as these burned by your troops were to the guards of the army of the United States, nor can your utmost vigilance prevent the destruction of every building on this side Kingsbridge. 'Tis not fear, Sir, 'tis not want of opportunity has preserved those buildings to this time, but a sense of the injustice and savageness of such a line of conduct, has hitherto saved them; and nothing but necessity will induce me to copy the example of this kind so frequently set us by your troops.

I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant

SAM. H. PARSONS.

General Parsons to General Tryon.

KINGSBRIDGE CAMP, *23d November, 1777.*

SIR.—Could I possibly conceive myself accountable to any revolted subject of the King of Great Britain, I might answer your letter received by the flag of truce yesterday, respecting the conduct of the party under Capt. Emmerick's command upon the taking of Peter and Cornelius Van Tassel. I have, however, candor enough to assure you, as much as I abhor every principle of inhumanity or ungenerous conduct, I should, were I more in authority, burn every committee-man's house within my reach, as I deem those agents the wretched instruments of the continued calamities of this country, and in order the sooner to purge this colony of them, I am willing to give twenty silver dollars for every acting committee-man who shall be delivered to the King's troops. I guess before the end of the next campaign, they will be torn in pieces by their own country-

men whom they have forcibly dragged, in opposition to their principles and duty, (after fining them to the extent of their property), to take up arms against their lawful sovereign, and compelled them to exchange their happy constitution for paper, rags, anarchy and distress. The ruins of the city of New York from the conflagration of the emissaries of your party last year, remain a memorial of their tender regard for their fellow beings exposed to the severity of a cold night.

This is the first correspondence I have held with the King's enemies in America on my own part, and as I am immediately under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, your future letters, dictated with decency, would be more properly directed to his Excellency.

I am, Sir, your humble servant

To General Parsons. WM. TRYON.

The letters of November 21 and 23, Tryon sent to Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and loftily wrote:—"By the enclosed correspondence between *me* and General Parsons, your Lordship may judge of the tone I think should be held towards the rebels." The entire correspondence is to be found in Volume VIII. of the New York Colonial Documents, pp. 735 to 745, London Documents 46 and 47.

The following letter was written by General Parsons to General Tryon in reply to his of Nov. 23.

FISHKILL, *January 1st, 1778.*

SIR.—Since I received yours of the 23rd of November, I have been employed in matters of importance which have not left me at liberty to acknowledge the receipt of your letter before; lest you should think me wanting in the respect due to your character, I beg your acceptance of this letter, which closes our epistolary correspondence.

It will ever be my intention to dictate with decency any letters I may send, however remote it may be from my wish to copy the examples of the persons my duty may compel me to correspond with; as propriety and decency ought to be observed in every transaction even with the most infamous characters, I shall never hope so nearly to assimilate myself to them as to be found wanting in that respect which is due to all my fellow beings in their stations and characters in life.

I should not have entertained a thought you had failed in the

duty you owe to your King in every part of the globe, or that you did not fully possess the spirit of his Ministry, which has precipitated the present crisis, even though you had omitted to assure me this had been the first correspondence you had held with the King's enemies in America.

The conflagration of New York you are pleased to charge to the American troops under the decent name of a party. This deserves no other answer than to assure you it has not the least foundation in truth, and that we are assured it gains no credit with officers whose rank and candor give opportunity to know and believe the truth. This like many other circumstances is charged to the account of those who were never believed guilty, to excite the rage and resentment of the ignorant and misguided against very improper objects. Perhaps I might suggest with as much propriety and more truth, this unhappy event was brought about by your own party from the same motives which induced them in August 1776 to mangle the dead bodies of some of the foreign troops in a most shocking and inhuman manner, and place them in the most conspicuous parts of the roads their brethren were to pass.

A justifiable resistance against unwarrantable invasions of the natural and social rights of mankind, if unsuccessful, I am sensible according to the fashion of the world, will be called rebellion; but when successful, will be viewed as a noble struggle for everything important in life. Whether I am now considered as a revolted subject of the King of Great Britain, or in any other light by his subjects, is very immaterial and gives me very little concern; future ages, I hope will do justice to my intentions and the present to the humanity of my conduct.

Few men are of talents so very inconsiderable as to be unalterably excluded from every degree of fame. A Nero and a Caligula have perpetuated their memory; perhaps twenty silver dollars may be motives with those you employ to do great honor to your Machiavelian maxims, especially to that which advises, never to commit crimes to the halves, and leave lasting monuments of your principles and conduct which will hand your memory down to posterity in indelible characters. We act on a different scale and hold ourselves indispensably bound, never to commit crimes, but execute what's necessary for our safety uninfluenced by sordid mercenary motives.

In the field of conjecture I shall not attempt to follow you; your talent of guessing may be greater than I can boast of; this satisfaction at least you may enjoy, if you find yourself mistaken in one conjecture, you have an undoubted right to guess again. I shall

content myself to wait 'til the event verifies your prediction or shows you are mistaken. Assuring you, I shall never pursue your measures for restoring peace, whether my authority should be greater or less, further than necessity shall compel me to retort the injuries the peaceable inhabitants of this country may receive from the hand of violence and oppression.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To General Tryon. SAM. H. PARSONS."

Tryon's brutality, as was to be expected, provoked speedy retaliation, not by the military authorities but by the injured inhabitants or their friends. November had not expired before a small party of the "advanced water-guard," slipping by the British guard-ships in the night, landed at Bloomingdale, surprised and captured the small guard at the landing and destroyed the country seat of Oliver DeLancey with everything it contained. Like the poor people of Phillips' Manor, Mrs. DeLancey and her daughters were forced to flee to the woods, barefooted and in their nightclothes, and shelterless, to wander about in the open air all night. This outrage, though but a return blow struck by the exasperated victims of Tryon's cruelties, and far less culpable than the cold-blooded barbarities of Tryon's troops, was promptly disavowed and disapproved by the Committee of Safety.

CHAPTER XIII

PARSONS' EXPEDITION TO LONG ISLAND. IN COMMAND AT WEST POINT. CORRESPONDENCE WITH GOVERNOR CLINTON. LETTER TO SIR HENRY CLINTON.

October, 1777—April, 1778

ON the 31st of October Putnam advised Washington that Poor's, Warner's, Learned's and Patterson's brigades, with Van Schaick's regiment and Morgan's rifle corps, fifty-seven hundred men in all, were on their way from Gates' army to join him in the Highlands, making his total force nine thousand strong, exclusive of Morgan's corps, the artillery and the New York and Connecticut militia. The same day at a Council of his principal officers, it was unanimously determined that four thousand men should move down the west side of the river to Haverstraw; that one thousand should be retained in the Highlands to guard the country and repair the Works, and that the remainder should march down the east side of the river to Kingsbridge, except Morgan's corps, which should join the Commander-in-Chief. The object of this disposition was to further Putnam's plan for diverting reinforcements from Howe's army and attacking New York, should the opportunity present itself. The troops under orders to join General Washington having left Fishkill on their march southward, General Putnam moved down the east side of the Hudson with that part of his force detached to operate against New York.

On the 27th of November, General Dickinson made his long contemplated descent on Staten Island. Crossing from New Jersey with fourteen hundred men, he marched seven miles into the Island, hoping to surprise the enemy encamped there under Generals Skinner and Campbell; but, as ill luck would have it, intelligence of the movement had reached them at three o'clock in the morning, in time to permit them to draw off their troops, and he was forced to return without accomplishing his

object. The same day General Putnam ordered General Parsons, then at White Plains, and General Warner, fresh from the plains of Saratoga, to march with their brigades towards Kingsbridge to aid in creating a diversion in that quarter. Putnam, in person, reconnoitered within three miles of Kingsbridge, but finding no opportunity to effect anything, diverged to New Rochelle, and there disposed his troops as if to cross the Sound and attack the forts at Huntington and Setauket. But before he could complete his preparations, it was found that the enemy had discovered his intentions and evacuated their Works.

General Putnam remained near the Sound until the middle of December, when, under orders from Washington, he returned with his troops to the Highlands. Meanwhile an expedition, to be under the separate command of General Parsons, was planned against Long Island. Two colonels of his brigade were to accompany him, Samuel B. Webb, who had just joined him with his regiment at Horseneck, and Colonel Meigs, who had been so successful in May at the eastern end of the Island. The expedition was to cross the Sound in three Divisions. The western, under Meigs, was to cross from Saw Pits (Port Chester) to Hempstead Harbor, about twelve miles distant, and attack a regiment stationed eight miles east of Jamaica; the middle, under Webb, was to land at Huntington and support either Division as might be required; the eastern, under the immediate command of Parsons, was to land further east on the Island and destroy vessels and stores collected there. Each Division was to have sailed on the evening of the 9th, but the Sound proved so rough that the whaleboats, in which Meigs' men were embarked, were unable to cross. Parsons and Webb left Norwalk at the appointed time, and, having sailing vessels, had no difficulty in crossing, but Webb, the next morning, unfortunately fell in with a British sloop of war and was captured, with four officers and twenty men of his regiment of regulars, besides forty militiamen. Parsons landed safely at Hockaback, about forty miles from the east end of the Island, and was completely successful in his part of the undertaking. Among his prisoners were several respecting whom he wrote to Governor Clinton, as follows:

LYME IN CONNECTICUT, *Dec. 28, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—Several persons have been brought from Long Island who have been exceedingly active in distressing the well affected there. Among them are Major Wickham, Major Hudson, Orange Webb and Matthew Wells of Southold township, John Ireland of Huntington and sundry others. None of them act under military commissions except Hudson; the others must be considered as State prisoners and fall within your jurisdiction, being subjects of your State. They are now with the Commissary of Prisoners at Hartford. If you think it necessary to give any particular orders respecting them, the Commissary will doubtless comply with any directions you give.

The well-affected inhabitants of Suffolk County are anxious to have Wickham, Hudson and Ireland kept upon the main; they much fear their return; they are now all upon their parole.

I am &c.,

To Governor Clinton. SAM. H. PARSONS.

The following letter from General Parsons to General Washington, written from Lyme, where he then was on a visit to his family, gives the details of his expedition to Long Island:—

LYME, *Dec. 29, 1777.*

DEAR GENERAL.—Col. Webb falling into the enemy's hands the 10th inst. you doubtless before this have been made acquainted with.

The descent on Long Island was designed to destroy the timber and boards prepared at the eastern end of Long Island for barracks in New York, to destroy the fleet there from Rhode Island for wood, to attack a regiment stationed about eight miles eastward of Jamaica and to remove or destroy whatever public stores should be found on the Island. For this purpose Col. Meigs was to have landed at Hempstead Harbor to attack the regiment near Jamaica; Col. Webb, near Huntington, to sustain Meigs and afford such aid to the Division eastward as should be wanted and destroy whatever was collected in that part of the County of Suffolk for the use of the enemy. The eastward Division, with which I was, landed at a place called Hockaback, about forty miles from the east end of the Island, with design to destroy the fleet, timber, boards &c. Col. Meigs, who was to have crossed from Sawpits, through the roughness of the water, was unable to pass over in his boats. The other two divisions sailed from Norwalk the evening of the 9th inst. with fair prospects, but unfortunately the armed sloop in which Col. Webb was, on the morn-

ing of the 10th fell in with the "Falcon" sloop of war in her passage from New York to Newport, and was forced on shore at so great a distance from the beach as rendered their escape so hazardous that most of them fell into the hands of the enemy.

Upon the enquiry I have been able to make, I believe that they were more unfortunate than guilty of any criminal neglect, and the falling in with that ship was perfectly accidental as none were stationed within many miles of that place. The eastern Division landed safely. The fleet (except the Swan and Harlem sloops of war and four other vessels) had sailed. One sloop had taken in her cargo of timber and boards; the other three had taken none, but being light went into the bay under cover of the armed vessels. The loaded sloop we took, and we destroyed all the timber and boards prepared for New York and a large quantity of wood cut for another fleet expected from Newport. Capt. Hart, with about forty men, was so fortunate as to find Capt. Ascough's boats within about twenty yards of the shore, and on their refusal to surrender gave them several well directed shots which did great execution, Capt. Ascough of the Swan, having his thigh broken; two other officers badly wounded; eight killed and about the same number wounded whose rank was unknown. This we have from one of the inhabitants on board the Swan. When the boats came alongside, the ships kept up a constant fire, but without execution. Immediately on this the ships weighed anchor and sailed for Newport.

The troops, except those taken with Col. Webb, are safely landed on the main again with about twenty prisoners taken here.

Col. Webb is now out on his parole to endeavor to effect an exchange for Lt. Col. Campbell of the 71st Regiment, and is to return in two months unless this is effected or he is otherwise exchanged. If there is no special reason to prevent the exchange of Col. Campbell, I would beg your Excellency's permission to send in Col. Campbell, but if any objection arises against his exchange, Col. Lawrence taken at Staten Island or any other of like rank will I suppose answer his parole if sent in season. If either of these ways or any other can procure Col. Webb's exchange, he will be made happy and the regiment greatly benefitted, as the affairs of the regiment are so circumstanced that no man can do justice to them if he is confined. He has always conducted himself as a good officer and as such merits the esteem of his superior officers.

I should at this time have requested your Excellency's permission to have left the service of my country in the army, were I not apprehensive the example would have too extensive an influence amongst

the officers of my brigade, already so discontented as to have produced very many applications for dismissals. I have endeavored with some success to give satisfaction with assurances Congress would pay attention to their case as would do justice. The general sentiments and practice of the country are such as to give too much cause for their complaint.

When the officers are calmed and have laid aside their present intentions, I hope I shall not be considered in a disagreeable light if my application for a dismissal should be nearer the opening of a new campaign than the close of this.

I am now by General Putnam's permission in the country for a few weeks with my family. As our Assembly sits next week at Hartford and not again till May I could wish measures to be adopted this session for filling the quota of troops from this State, and as I know your Excellency's opinion is of great weight, I am satisfied an early attention will be paid to the subject if recommended by your Excellency.

I intend to spend some days at Hartford, where, if I can contribute anything to furnishing an army at the opening of another campaign, I shall think myself happy in rendering some service to the cause of my country though I should quit the field myself.

I am, dear General, with esteem

Yr. obt. servant

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

That Parsons was not inactive while in Hartford, appears from this entry in the records of the Connecticut Council of Safety:—

At a meeting of the Governor and Council of Safety, January 16, 1778, upon the representation of General Samuel H. Parsons, showing to this Board that a small privateer is now fitting out by the Governor's order to drive small tenders and boats from the western coast, which cannot be completed without the loan of one of the nine pounders at New Haven belonging to the State, and praying for the loan thereof for the purpose aforesaid, it was, Resolved, That the same be loaned to General Parsons and that he give his receipt for the same.

The following letter from General Parsons to Colonel Webb, was probably written by him while on his way from Connecticut to the Highlands:—

YONKERS, *February 8, 1778.*

DEAR COLONEL.—I received your kind letter of the 3d inst., this evening on my return from our mutual friend, Governor Clinton, and have the pleasure to assure you his opinion is not shaken by any reports he has heard. If you should be exchanged, I beg you to direct Major Huntington to come on to camp as soon as possible; he is much wanted. If 'tis possible to procure me a pencil and ivory note book, buttons for a coat, lining &c., I shall be particularly obliged for your care for me in this matter. A declaration of war between France and England; Pitt in administration; a general exchange of prisoners very speedily and a prohibition against calling us rebels, gains credit here.

When the drafts are made, I think 'twill be well to have some good recruiting officers at home, as, if there is the greatest prospect of closing the war, our prospects of recruiting will be increased. All others of your officers, (unless some special difficulties exist,) and all soldiers whose furloughs are out, I desire may be directed to join immediately, as the Works (at West Point) are of great importance to be finished and our laborers are few.

The three following letters are from Parsons to his old friend and compatriot, Thomas Mumford of Groton, a member of the Connecticut legislature, and one of those who aided him in raising money for the capture of Ticonderoga in 1775:—

LYME, *December 28, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—I came home last night and found your letter of the 24th. I am very sorry your prospects of redeeming your son are no better. I wish for one you were closer connected with the members of the Family Union; everything in my power shall be done to procure his exchange or enlargement. I have not yet received a letter from Maj. Humphreys. When I do, I will inform you immediately. I hope through the intervention of Mr. Webb to procure my young friend without the aid of the Governor or his Council. Enclosed is a letter to Mr. Wickham. As I expect to see you next Tuesday, I have not been more particular. I will then give a letter to Mr. Wickham and a flag if you desire it.

I have sold the little interest I have in this town. If you can inform me where I can hire a house and about forty or fifty acres of land for a year till our troubles end, you will much oblige

Yr friend and obt. servt.

To Thomas Mumford. SAM. H. PARSONS.

LYME, *January 4, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I last night received a letter from General Putnam in which is this paragraph. "A letter from Lewis Pintard Esq., agent for our prisoners in New York, has put it entirely out of my power to do anything in favor of Mr. Mumford. He says that the General has absolutely declared that no officers shall be exchanged until a general one takes place.

He gives some camp news. Says the Randolph has taken an Indiaman. The talk of a French war is very rife, and the same thing is whispered in New York. Christmas eve Captain Savage took eight prisoners within musket shot of Fort Independence. Same evening, two officers shot at and one killed near White Plains. Two captains of vessels sent with a flag have remained with the enemy.

S. H. PARSONS.

To Thomas Mumford.

January 22, 1778.

DEAR SIR.—I intended before I left you, to have mentioned the case of General Arnold, who is languishing under the neglect of his country, when he has done more perhaps than any one man to restore their sinking liberties. A man of bravery feels more sensibly the appropriation of his countrymen than thousands of gold or silver; this is a cheap tribute and justly his due. I wish he may receive some public testimonial of the approbation of his native country; and that we may not always remain singular in this neglect.

I find a great complaint among the officers that they are fourfolded for their Polls when in service. Whether the law exempts the officer from a poll tax or not, I do not know, but if not, I think it exceedingly hard they should be compelled to pay; and more so to be fourfolded when they are absent and cannot have opportunity to know your laws or to procure your fourfold abated. I wish you to move a law by which they shall be excused from your poll tax the year past and in future, and that all fourfolds be abated them. There is more reason for the Assembly to interpose in this than in ordinary cases, as the officer is not in a situation to apply to your listers himself before the tax is gathered.

I am &c.

To Thomas Mumford. SAM. H. PARSONS.

On the 5th of November, Congress had extended Gates' command to embrace the Highlands, and invested him with ample powers to repair and rebuild the Works; but, although urged by Washington in his letter of December 2, to attend to the

business without delay, he had done nothing when he left the Department in January to take the Presidency of the Board of War. Anticipating his non-action, Washington, the same day, wrote to Governor Clinton urging him to take the "chief direction and superintendence of the business." This, on the 20th, Clinton declined to do, explaining that, as the legislature was to meet in March, his time would be fully occupied by his civil duties. On the same day Washington wrote also to General Putnam, as follows, requesting him in the most urgent terms to employ his whole force in constructing and completing the works necessary for the defense of the Hudson, and to consult Governor Clinton, General Parsons and Colonel Radière upon the matter:—

HEADQUARTERS, *December 2, 1777.*

DEAR SIR.—The importance of the North River in the present contest, and the necessity of defending it, are subjects which have been so frequently and so fully discussed, and are so well understood, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them. These facts at once appear when it is considered that it runs through a whole State; that it is the only passage by which the enemy from New York, or any part of our coast, can ever hope to cooperate with an army from Canada; that the possession of it is indispensably essential to preserve the communication between the eastern, middle and southern states; and, further, that upon its security in a great measure depend our chief supplies of flour for the subsistence of such forces as we may have occasion for in the course of the war, either in the eastern or northern departments, or in the country lying high up on the west side of it. These facts are familiar to all; they are familiar to you. I therefore request you, in the most urgent terms, to turn your most serious and active attention to this infinitely important object. Seize the present opportunity, and employ your whole force and all the means in your power for erecting and completing, as far as it shall be possible, such works and obstructions as may be necessary to defend and secure the river against any future attempts of the enemy. You will consult Governor Clinton, General Parsons and the French engineer, Colonel Radière, upon the occasion. By gaining the passage, you know the enemy have already laid waste and destroyed all the houses, mills and towns accessible to them. Unless proper measures are taken to prevent, they will renew their ravages in the spring, or as soon as the season will admit, and perhaps Albany, the only town in the State of any importance remain-

ing in our hands, may undergo a like fate, and a general havoc and devastation take place.

To prevent these evils, therefore, I shall expect that you will exert every nerve, and employ your whole force in future, while and whenever it is practicable, in constructing and forwarding the proper works and means of defense. The troops must not be kept out on command, and acting in detachments to cover the country below, which is a consideration infinitely less important and interesting.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

To General Putnam. GEO. WASHINGTON.

On the 25th of January, 1778, Washington, uneasy at the delay, again wrote Putnam:—

I begin to be very apprehensive that the season will entirely pass away before anything material will be done for the defense of the Hudson River. You are well acquainted with the great necessity there is for having the Works there finished as soon as possible; and I most earnestly desire that the strictest attention may be paid to every matter which may contribute to finishing and putting them in a respectable state before spring.

The Forts and other Works in the Highlands having been completely destroyed by the British, it became a question of importance whether they should be restored, or others erected in new places to be selected for the purpose. After careful examination, it was finally decided by Putnam and his officers, and by a committee of the legislature appointed to assist in the matter, to build at West Point a fort with an interior circuit of six hundred yards, and to obstruct the river by sinking *chevaux-de-frise* and by stretching a boom across it from shore to shore. The place selected for the boom was the narrowest part of the river, where it would be commanded by the Fort, and where a point jutting out into the stream compelled all vessels in rounding it to change their course and lessen their headway, thus keeping them longer under fire and preventing them from striking the boom with any considerable force. The boom was to consist of two chains resting on the ends of pine logs fifteen feet in length, laid with the current, and when completed would resemble a ladder. The links of the

chain were to be two feet in length and made of two and one-quarter inch square iron. The contract for the chain was given to Noble, Townsend and Co., proprietors of the Sterling Iron Works, which is still in operation near Sloatsburgh in Rockland County.

On the 13th of February, Putnam reported to General Washington as to the progress of the work at West Point:—

The state of affairs now at this Post, you will please to observe is as follows: the chain and necessary anchors are contracted for, to be completed by the first of April; and from the intelligence I have received, there is reason to believe they will be finished by that time. Parts of the boom intended to have been used at Fort Montgomery, sufficient for this place, are remaining. Some of the iron is exceedingly bad; this I hope to have replaced with good iron soon. The *chevaux-de-frise* will be completed by the time the River will admit of sinking them. The batteries near the water and the fort to cover them, are laid out. Barracks and huts for about three hundred men are completed, and barracks for about the same number are covered. A road to the River has been made with great difficulty.

As to the condition of the troops he says:—

Dubois' regiment is unfit to be ordered on duty, there not being one blanket in the regiment. Very few have either a shoe or a shirt, and most of them have neither stockings, breeches or overalls. Several hundred men are rendered useless for want of necessary apparel.

General Parsons has returned to camp some time since, and takes upon himself the command to-morrow, when I shall set out for Connecticut." I am &c.,

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

To General Washington.

On the 14th of February, 1778, General Putnam having left for Connecticut, the command of West Point and all the Posts and troops in the Highlands, together with the duty of completing the Works planned for the defense of the Hudson, devolved on General Parsons. This latter duty proved full of perplexities and embarrassments growing out of the confusion in which Putnam had left the affairs of the Department, as

will be seen by the following correspondence between Parsons and Governor Clinton. Parsons' Headquarters were at Robinson's House, opposite West Point, from which on the 15th, he writes:—

DEAR SIR.—Colonel Wyncoop is now with me and has taken a memorandum of articles to procure at Albany and that part of the country. The gun boats, he says, he thinks are not begun which were to be built at Albany; he says General Schuyler will be particularly useful to him in procuring what he is to furnish, and will be able to give such directions about the gun-boats as will expedite the completion of them. I would beg you, Sir, to write to General Schuyler on the subject and desire his assistance therein, as no man can do more service than the General, if he can be induced to undertake the direction of the matter. As I am lately come to this Post and not furnished with any account of what is prepared or where the various works are carrying on; what workmen are employed; what materials are now ready or tools to work with; in short, I came to this command in most disagreeable circumstances, nothing done, everything expected and wished for, and everything in confusion. I have everything to pick from perfect chaos. I must, therefore, beg you to give me what assistance you can, and that you would write Colonel Wyncoop from time to time at Albany and give such directions as you think necessary.

I am with esteem &c.,
SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Clinton.

To which Governor Clinton replies:—

POUGHKEEPSIE, *February 16, 1778.*.

DEAR SIR.—I will write to General Schuyler agreeably to your request and give you every other assistance in my power in forwarding the works under your direction. I know the confused state you must have found things in, and most sincerely wish they had been hitherto so conducted as to have made your task more easy to yourself and advantageous to the public.

I am &c.
GEO. CLINTON.

To General Parsons.

The same day General Parsons wrote to Governor Clinton respecting the difficulty of obtaining teams to use upon the Works, and asked his direction as to the course to be pursued in securing them:—

HIGHLANDS, *February 16, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I applied to Major Strang for twenty teams and had assurances they should be sent this day; instead of teams, I this day received the enclosed letter. The inhabitants have made great complaints, and perhaps with some reason, against the exercise of military force in these cases; indeed, 'tis the road to obliterate the ideas of civil liberty and the rights of a citizen. I am sensible I came to this command under very disagreeable circumstances, the minds of the people not being disposed to make favorable interpretations of such exertions as their own misconduct may at some times make absolutely necessary; their tempers soured with the General who commands the Department (Putnam) and not so well inclined to my command as I could wish. These things ought to make me more cautious in invading the rights of the civil magistrate, than would be necessary where jealousies and ill dispositions did not subsist in the minds of those nearly adjacent to this Post.

The importance of a speedy completion of the Works I need not urge to your Excellency, who, I know, feels the necessity as forcibly as any man. I must beg you, Sir, to give some direction in this and such like cases, and if the committee, appointed to supply, want the authority mentioned in Major Strang's letter, that they might be empowered to impress where necessary, or, if it must be ordered by the commanding officer in the military department, that your legislature would give directions for that purpose; in which case he would act, not in a military character, but under the authority of your Act. The weather is such that nothing can be now done, and there's time to wait your answer before I take any steps in pursuance of his letter, which at present I have declined, and shall not do, unless directed thereto by your Excellency or the Legislative Body. Indeed, I am of opinion no good has or will result from too frequent use of this practice by military officers. Your answer will much oblige.

Yr. Excellency's obt. humble servt.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Clinton.

Here follows the letter from Major Strang and Governor Clinton's reply to General Parsons' letter:—

HANOVER, *February 16, 1778.*

SIR.—Agreeable to your request, I have tried these two days to get the teams, but cannot prevail on any. The committee supposes that it does not come under their authority to give a warrant to

impress teams, there being no clause in the resolution for that purpose.

You, being the commanding officer to whom the charge is committed, with the committee appointed to assist you, I do not know of any better method (and so speedy to obtain them) as for you to send down a guard with orders to impress teams for that purpose; and, if you desire, I will direct them where to go.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. JOS'E STRANG.

POUGHKEEPSIE, *February 17, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I am favored with yours of the 16th inst., enclosing a letter from Major Strang to you. I am sensible of the many difficulties you labor under in your new command. I am persuaded most of them arise from the causes you first ascribed them to and not from any dislike to your having the command.

I am of the opinion that Mr. Strang and the other gentlemen of the committee, have competent authority to procure whatever shall be requested by the commanding officer and may be necessary for carrying on the Works for the defense of the River in the Highlands, and that whatever they shall do or order to be done therein will be considered as being done by the civil authority of the State.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. CLINTON.

The three following letters are from General Parsons to Governor Clinton respecting matters at West Point:—

WEST POINT, *February 20, 1778.*

SIR.—The completion of the necessary defenses on Hudson's River is of very great importance to this and every of the United States. Nothing more embarrasses this matter at present than the want of money in the Quartermaster's Department.

For some reason, I know not what, this Department has been so long neglected that our affairs are already almost ruined. In this exigency, I must entreat your Excellency's influence to procure a loan from your State until we can be supplied from Congress, or at least that the sums already advanced the Quartermaster may not be called for at present. Should he be obliged to replace them soon, our Works, I am certain will very soon be at a full stand. I ought to mention that none of the troops to be raised by this State are arrived at or near White Plains, except about thirty at Tarrytown;

that the time of service of the militia ordered out by Connecticut expires next Friday, and Colonel Meigs will be ordered up next week. I am &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Clinton.

ROBINSONS', *February 21, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—The dark scenes which have troubled me begin to disperse; things now look in a more promising train. I hope in all next week to have timber and fascines upon the ground which will make a good figure in our forts and batteries, if Mr. Wisner and Major Strang don't fail me. They have been here and seem determined to exert themselves to discharge their duty, and I do not intend the fault, if the Works are not completed, to fall on me. The credulity which has so distinguishedly characterized our country hitherto, appears to me to be very imprudent and almost unpardonable. When the fortifications are to be begun, I think no family ought to be suffered to remain on the Point, nor any person admitted there occasionally but those who are well recommended. Mr. Moore's family and Colonel La Radière's clerk, who is a deserter from General Burgoyne, I think should be removed; 'twill otherwise become impossible to prevent the enemy from having regular returns of the state of our fortifications if these persons should be disposed to injure us. Your opinion and direction therein when you have leisure, will oblige,

Your friend &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

P. S.—Colonel DeLancey has returned agreeable to his parole. Colonel Webb is not exchanged and has gone back to the city.

To Governor Clinton.

ROBINSONS', *February 24, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—Enclosed are some letters received from New York. Birdsall may not be worth attending to. I know very little of him, but as he was entrusted with a flag by the commanding officer here, I think some attention ought to be paid to his case for the honor of the officer whose authority is slighted by the detention of the flag. I have, therefore, written to General Clinton on the subject, a copy of which is enclosed. If you think it necessary to add your weight, it may perhaps release an unhappy man from confinement.

We have the Works going on now with some order and spirit. One thousand sticks of timber are cut and many got out of the mountains. I believe I shall this week have them mostly drawn to the place where the Fort is to be built, and about ten to fifteen

thousand fascines, if the weather proves favorable to our designs. A few more teams we wish for, but are most distressed for forage; till to-day we have had none and now but a small quantity. I intend to-morrow to visit the Iron Works and find the situation of the chain, after which I will wait on your Excellency at Poughkeepsie.

I am &c.,

To Governor Clinton. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Here follows the letter to Sir Henry Clinton, the British Commander in New York, referred to in the foregoing letter:—

HIGHLANDS, *February 23, 1778.*

SIR.—I have received an application from Mr. Benjamin Birdsall of the State of New York, who went under the sanction of a flag to Long Island and has been confined as a prisoner in New York contrary to the laws of war and the established custom of nations. The reasons of his confinement, as assigned by Commissioner Loring, are, an order of Lord Howe, published sometime last summer, that no flags of truce should be permitted between Connecticut and Long Island, and the detention of one David Rice at Fairfield, who was pilot to a flag of truce from New York to New Haven.

The first of these reasons seems to have been mentioned by way of jest and diversion, as, since the publication of this order, several flags have gone from Connecticut to Long Island and from Long Island to Connecticut without molestation, the design of the order having evidently ceased.

I cannot tell, Sir, what construction is put upon this conduct in New York, but in the view of common sense, it is an open and abundantly sufficient revocation of Lord Howe's prohibition, especially as the practice of sending flags from the prohibited places was first commenced by yourselves.

Rice, the person detained and now requested as a ransom for Birdsall, escaped from gaol in Fairfield, where he was confined for the perpetration of an act, not only infamous, but felonious, in the view of every civilized nation. I need not suggest to you, Sir, the total impropriety of honoring such a villain with the protection of a flag, nor the entire rectitude of seizing him whenever or wherever he might be found.

In addition to this, the flag on board of which Rice was, without any reason or even pretence, came into the harbor of Fairfield, when their destiny and limits were singly New Haven; for that

transgression the vessel and men might have been justly seized. But we are not punctilious and would rather err, if it be an error, on the side of benevolence. But, Sir, were Rice's crimes, character and first imprisonment buried in oblivion, and the man by a magical spell restored to a reputation of honesty, nothing can be more improper or unjust than the detention of Mr. Birdsall by way of retaliation for the imprisonment of Mr. Rice. Rice was seized by the order and authority of the State of Connecticut. Birdsall received his flag from the commanding officer of this Post, departments, as you very well know, Sir, totally distinct and unconnected; nor is it in the power, were it ever so agreeable to the inclination of the officer commanding here, to release Rice, as he is responsible solely to the laws and civil magistracy of the State.

For these reasons, Sir, you will not wonder that I think it my indispensable duty to make a requisition of Mr. Birdsall. Were it possible, as I am not willing to believe it is, that such a villain as Rice, a felon taken in the piratical act of running away with a sloop and cargo, a man whom the interests of mankind and the universal opinion of refined nations condemns to the gallows, could, if known, be patronized by a person of the rank and character of Sir Henry Clinton, yet it is exceeding evident that the act of retaliation ought by no means be directed to Mr. Birdsall.

I flatter myself, therefore, that upon the receipt of this, orders will be immediately given for his liberation and return.

I am &c.,

To Lieut. General Clinton. SAM. H. PARSONS.

General Parsons, writing from Crompond in Westchester County, advises Governor Clinton that,

Five persons are apprehended on their road to New York, who will be sent to Poughkeepsie to-morrow. By one of them, from Stillwater, we are informed that one, Stephen Hooper, is on the road to New York and that he has two letters, one from Governor Carleton (of Canada), the other from Sir John Johnson, concealed in the heels of his shoes. He is about five feet six inches high, about thirty years of age, a large black beard, blue coat turned up with the same, flat brass buttons and a small brimmed hat and leather breeches. One, James Conklin, is in company with him, is something taller, thin visage, light countenance, basket buttons on his coat. The informant says, he believes these persons are now near Poughkeepsie at John Valentine's, who is a relative of his. This information I thought necessary to give you that proper

measures may be taken to apprehend them. There are at this place about one hundred barrels of provisions.

I am &c.,

To Governor Clinton. SAM. H. PARSONS.

March 5, 1778, General Parsons writes from his Headquarters at Robinson's, to Governor Clinton respecting a strike among the artificers at West Point:—

MY DEAR SIR.—Enclosed I send you the report of a Court Martial on the artificers at West Point. They have been a refractory set of men for a long time and seem to have agreed that they will not work till their own terms and particular inclinations are complied with from time to time. La Radière, I am informed, intends asking leave to retire from the Post. As the carrying on the Works is not in my hands, I beg your advice what is best to be done on the enclosed report, and that the report may be returned with your opinion, although I suppose it an undoubted right of the commanding officer to approve or disapprove the sentences of Courts Martial, yet, as it may be supposed to concern your department, I would wish to consult you lest you may think yourself injured by the approbation thereof, which I shall do unless otherwise advised.

Yours &c.,

To Governor Clinton. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Materials for the Fort having been collected and all things being in readiness to commence breaking ground, General Parsons writes to Governor Clinton requesting him to have five hundred to one thousand additional troops ordered to West Point where they can now be employed to advantage on the Works:—

ROBINSONS, *March 10, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—Your last is fully satisfactory. I shall avail myself of your license to procure a warrant for much of my conduct.

We shall begin to break ground in two days, when we shall be able to employ five hundred men more than we now have to great advantage; in ten days or a fortnight, we can employ five hundred more. I must beg your Excellency's attention to this subject and that you will be pleased to order these additional troops as soon as possible.

General Schuyler writes me he thinks three or four hundred men may be spared from Albany. I wish your Excellency to re-

quest the Marquis (Lafayette) to order them down and that Colonel Putnam's regiment may be of the number; he will be very useful, being much acquainted with the duty of an engineer; but I beg of you not to suffer the "Congress' Own" regiment of infernals to make part of the number.

Sylvanus Hait, who lives near this house, has gone to the enemy and left his family. One Swim and sundry other Tories in this vicinity, ought also to be removed to make room for the troops, as well as for our own safety. I wish your Excellency to give the necessary orders for their removal. As they are all upon the Robinson estate, I suppose the Committee of Sequestration will remove them if your Excellency directs.

I am with esteem &c.,

To Governor Clinton. SAM. H. PARSONS.

From this time the defenses of West Point progressed rapidly towards completion under the superintendence of General Parsons. By the end of April the Fort had been put in "some state of defense," the boom stretched across the River and the *chevaux-de-frise* with the other obstructions to navigation placed in position.

CHAPTER XIV

AT WEST POINT. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN CONSTRUCTING THE WORKS. CORRESPONDENCE WITH WASHINGTON. SOCIAL LIFE. DWIGHT'S "CONQUEST OF CANAAN."

January—March, 1778

GENERAL PARSONS in his letter to Washington of December 29, reporting the details of his expedition to Long Island, expressed a wish to retire from the army when he could do so without injury to the service. Washington replied in the following letter, urging him to consider the matter well lest his example should increase the discontent, already too prevalent among the officers.

HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY FORGE, *January 16, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I am sorry to find you have thoughts of leaving the army. I hope you will consider the matter well and the consequences which such a procedure may involve. Besides the loss of your own services, the example might have a disagreeable influence on other officers. The discontent prevailing in the army from various causes has become but too prevalent, and I fear, unless some measures can be adopted to render the situation of the officers more comfortable than what it has been for some time past, that it will increase. The depreciation of our money, the difficulty of procuring necessaries, and the exhorbitant prices they are obliged to pay for them, when they can be had, are among the causes of dissatisfaction. Whatever your determination may be, I am persuaded you will not remain an idle spectator, or be wanting in your exertions to promote the cause.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

To this letter, four days after assuming command in the Highlands, General Parsons replied as follows:—

HIGHLANDS-ON-HUDSON-RIVER, *February 18, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I had the honor of receiving yours of the 16th of January about eight days since at this place, where I have returned to take charge of my brigade. In the present state of the army, I shall continue in my command, lest a different conduct may prove injurious to the cause of my country at this conjuncture of affairs. However my inclinations may induce me to retire to the enjoyment of domestic happiness, I cannot think myself warranted to indulge my wishes at a time when so many officers under my command are desirous of leaving the toils of war for the pleasures of private life. . . .

Almost every obstacle within the circle of possibility has happened to retard the progress of the Obstructions in and Fortifications on the banks of Hudson River. Preparations for completing them are now in a state which will afford a good prospect of completing them in April, and unless some difficulties yet unforeseen should prevent, I think we cannot fail by the fore part of that month to have them in a good degree of forwardness. Nothing on my part shall be wanting to put them in a state of forwardness to answer the reasonable expectations of the country as early as possible.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

General Washington replied as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY FORGE, *5th March, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I am favored with yours of the 18th Feby. I am exceedingly glad to hear your determination to remain in the army at this time when too many are withdrawing themselves from the service, and I am not less pleased at the account you give me of the progress of the obstructions and fortifications in and upon the River. I can only recommend your strictest attention to a work of so much consequence. I must also desire that you will have all the arms at the different Posts in your neighborhood collected, and have those that want repair put into the hands of the armorers at Fishkill, for I am certain when we come to draw our force together in the spring, that we shall want arms, notwithstanding the considerable importations. Col. Hay of Haverstraw, informs me that there is a large quantity of forage collected at that place which he fears will fall into the enemy's hands if it is not removed or a proper guard sent over to protect it. As your force will not probably allow you to do the latter with convenience, I wish you would do all in your

power to effect the former. The enemy, I should suppose, must be much distressed for the want of it, and when our stores come forward in the spring, our horses will stand in need of it. As Col. Hay complains of General Putnam's inattention to this matter when he represented it to him, I must beg you to see to it.

The Committee of Congress who are now here have desired that no commissions be filled up till some new general arrangements of the army are completed. The gentlemen will not lose any of their pretensions to rank by waiting a little time longer for their commissions, which shall be forwarded as soon as the business above mentioned is finished.

Col. Webb's officers will take rank from the time he really appointed them. As I do not know when that was, he or Lieut. Col. Livingston must make an exact return of their ranks and time of appointment &c.

I am, dear Sir, Yours &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

General Parsons upon assuming command at West Point, found himself very much embarrassed in his efforts to hasten the construction of the Works, not only by the confusion in which the affairs of the Department had been left by General Putnam, but by a lack of sufficient authority to make the necessary contracts. Although he was able to keep the troops busily employed, he could not accomplish all he desired. In the following letter to Washington, he explains the difficulties under which he labors and asks what he shall do under the circumstances.

CAMP WEST POINT, *March 7th, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—In General Putnam's absence the command of the troops devolves on me with all the perplexities it is capable of being involved in. I find the resolve of Congress of the 5th of Nov. directing the making Obstructions in and Fortifications on the banks of Hudson's River and empowering General Gates to transact that matter, are *personal* to Gen. Gates and give no order or authority to the commanding officer as such. By a letter from your Excellency to Gen. Putnam of the 2d Dec., I find him directed to remove all the troops from outposts or commands and attend to fortifying on the River; another of the 27th of December directs that small parties patrol towards the Plains; by a resolve of the 18th Feb., Congress empowered Gov. Clinton to superintend the Works and to

call the militia of New York, Connecticut, &c., for effecting the purposes, and the commanding officer at Peekskill is ordered and directed to give him every assistance in his power in forwarding and perfecting the business committed to him. Governor Clinton does not choose to accept the appointment, but in this and every other matter which will conduce to the interest of the country is willing to afford his aid and advice. From this state of facts your Excellency will see the difficult and disagreeable situation I am plunged into. The country expects the Works to be completed as early in the season as possible. The powers given by Congress are *personal* only, and evidently designed to be so, and by the resolves the commanding officer has no authority to concern himself about it. Under these circumstances I must entreat your Excellency's direction what I shall do. I most ardently wish to aid Gov. Clinton or any gentleman appointed to superintend the work; at present no person has the direction, I suppose it to be because no man chooses to be responsible for the post; I have kept the troops at work because I found them here when I took command, and had not particularly attended to the resolves of Congress concerning them; I have given orders and directions and caused contracts to be made for completing the works which I now find I had no right to concern myself about. Governor Clinton does not choose to give any order about the matter, lest he should be thought to accept his appointment, and although I am conscious no responsibility has been incurred by my orders but what was necessary, and the works are carrying on by the troops under my command, yet as I now find I have no authority for the purpose, I do not think I have sufficient power to justify me in giving further orders whereby the public may incur an expense without some express direction for it; indeed by continuing to do it, I put myself in the power of any man who may choose to sacrifice me; I am fully of your Excellency's opinion that the troops cannot be so well employed in any other way as in perfecting the obstructions in and defences near the river, and shall continue them here until there is time to receive your Excellency's further orders.

By your Excellency's letter of the 2d of December, all the troops are ordered here; by the 27th, part only are to be employed; by the resolve of the 5th of November, as many as Gen. Gates shall choose to employ; by that of the 18th Feb., none but militia. Whether your Excellency intends all the troops to be employed in the works or part only; whether the commanding officer here shall superintend the works and have discretionary powers to order and direct what he thinks necessary without any resolve of Congress for the purpose,

where no person is particularly appointed for the purpose, or when the persons appointed refuses to accept, are questions which very much concern me at present and which I beg your Excellency to direct me in. The weather has been such since the 15th of February as has greatly retarded us in the works. About seven days of the time has been such that we could do nothing. I shall exert myself to have them in a state of defense as early as possible, so far as I can without any power whatever, or by the due exercise of such directions as your Excellency shall please to give me. Col. Radière finding it impossible to complete the fort and other defenses intended at this Post in such manner as to effectually withstand the attempts of the enemy to pass up the river early in the spring, and not choosing to hazard his reputation on works erected on a different scale, calculated for a short duration only, has desired leave to wait on your Excellency and Congress, which I have granted him. In justice to Col. Radière, I ought to say, he appears to be a gentleman of science and knowledge in his profession, and disposed to render every service he is able to do. I shall with the advice of Governor Clinton expedite the building of such Works as are most necessary for immediate defense.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

General Parsons has been criticized by some historians for his course in this matter, but it was plain to him as a lawyer, and is perfectly apparent from his presentation of the case, that, without the authorization of Congress, he was powerless to make contracts which would be binding on the Government, and that whatever he might do without such authority, must be upon his individual responsibility, as was the expedition he aided in setting on foot to capture Ticonderoga. Congress had empowered Gates and Clinton to do whatever might be necessary, but had neglected to confer the same authority upon the Commandant of the Post for the time being. That Washington agreed with Parsons in his contention, is manifest from his instructions to General McDougall, when on March 16 he assigned him to the command of the Highlands:— "I have written to Congress to give you every power necessary to promote the objects of your command; and in the mean time you are to consider yourself authorized, *so far as can depend upon me,* to take every measure conducive to that end."

On the 7th of March, 1778, Washington again wrote Parsons from his headquarters at Valley Forge, as follows:—

In a letter from General Putnam of the 13th ult., he informed me that there were two large scows and several gun boats on hand, and that the timber for two floating batteries was cut, but the work not begun; I must beg your attention to the completing of these several kinds of craft and to the repairing of any others that may want it. We shall have occasion for the common boats to transport men, baggage and stores with expedition when we are drawing our reinforcements from the eastward, and for the armed boats and batteries to keep open the communications should any of the enemy's vessels attempt to interrupt it. Gen. Putnam wrote me at the same time that some boats were building at Albany, but did not know in what forwardness they were. Be pleased to inform yourself and urge the necessity of having them finished."

To this letter General Parsons replied, reporting considerable progress in the work under his charge:—

CAMP WEST POINT, *March 16th 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—On the 14th inst. I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 7th of March, and also one of the 8th containing a copy of the 5th of March. I shall pay particular attention to forwarding the work of the boats designed for transporting over, as well as those which are to be employed for defense on Hudson's River. I have ordered all the boats and other crafts on the River to be collected in different places and put to the best possible state immediately. I have not got a return; when that is made I shall be able to give your Excellency a particular account of them. When I was last at Poughkeepsie, the gun boats were in such a state as to give hopes of their being fit for use within a few weeks, and as Gov. Clinton has been kind enough to take upon himself the direction of them, I think we may hope to see them completed soon. I will send to Albany and know the state of the boats there, and as the River will soon be clear of ice, I will order down such boats and other crafts as can be had there for transportation over the River. If the chain is completed we shall be ready to stretch it over the River next week. A sufficient number of *chevaux-de-frise* to fill those parts left open last year, are ready to sink as soon as the weather and the state of the River will admit it to be done. I hope to have two sides and one bastion of the fort in some state of defense in about a fort-

night, the other sides need very little to secure them. There is a prospect of having five or six cannon mounted in one of our batteries this week. I think the Works are going on as fast as could be expected from our small number of men, total want of materials provided, and of money to purchase them. We have borrowed and begged and hired money to this time. I have several times advanced my last shilling towards purchasing materials &c., and I believe this has been the case with almost every officer here. As we still live, I hope we shall accomplish the Works in the River in season, if the enemy move with their accustomed caution and tardiness; when I hope Congress will repay what has been advanced, and cannot think us blameable if we have been compelled to subject the country to some extra expense to save the public credit and forward the business intrusted to our care. By a letter from General Putnam, I shall expect his return to this Post by the end of this week. He has purchased three eighteen pounders mounted on travelling carriages, which are on the road from Boston. The contents of your Excellency's letter of the 8th shall be particularly attended to. If no other difficulties appear than at present offer themselves to view, perhaps an attempt may be made within eight days, much sooner it cannot be for reasons I will hereafter give. The letter of the 5th referred to in that of the eighth not having come to hand, gives me some concern, as that falling into the enemy's hands may wholly defeat us; I shall be unwilling to make the attempt unless it should arrive safe. The Horse mentioned by your Excellency cannot be had, one horseman only being at this Post at present, but some other mode may be substituted.

I am your Excellency's Obedt. Servt.

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

To General Washington.

On the 11th of March General Parsons wrote to Capt. Thomas Machin at New Windsor, the engineer employed there in directing the construction of the boom:—

WEST POINT *March 11th, 1778.*

SIR.—As. Col. La Radière has left us, I wish you, if you can be absent from New Windsor for a day, to come to this Post tomorrow or the day after, to advise about the proper method of fortifying this place.

Again, in reference to the movements of the enemy in New York, General Parsons thus writes to General Washington under date:—

FISHKILL *20th March, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—By a variety of accounts from New York, the enemy design a speedy movement from thence; about thirty transports are in ballast, cannon taken on board and troops marched from Kingsbridge to the city last Sunday. Where their destination is I cannot conjecture from the information I have received. I hope not up this River until our defense is more perfect. I this moment hear the fleet sailed the day before yesterday, and are said to be bound eastward. They went towards the Hook from New York, Your Excellency's letter of the 5th I received the 18th inst., and shall pursue your directions.

I am your Excellency's obedt. servt.

To General Washington. SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

The letters of March 5 and 8, above referred to, relate to a proposed attempt to capture the British Commander, Sir Henry Clinton, and are as follows:—

VALLEY FORGE, *March 5th, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I learn from undoubted authority that General Clinton quarters in Captain Kennedy's house in the city of New York, which you know is near Fort George and by the late fire stands in a manner alone. What guards may be at or near his Quarters, I cannot with precision say; and, therefore, shall not say anything on this score, lest it should prove a misinformation; but I think it one of the most practicable (and it will be amongst the most desirable and honorable) things imaginable to take him prisoner.

This house lying close by the water, (No. 1, Broadway), and a retired way through a back yard or garden leading into it, what, if you have whale boats (8 or 10) but want of secrecy, can prevent the execution in the hands of an enterprising party. The embarkation might even be (and I should think this best), at King's Ferry on the first of the ebb, and early in the evening. Six or eight hours with change of hands, would row the boats under the west shore and very secretly to the city, and the flood tide will hoist them back again; or a party of horse might be sent to meet them at Fort Lee.

I had like not to have mentioned that no ship of war is in the North River, (was not at least ten days ago), nor within 400 yards of the Point, all being in the East River. I shall say no more. This is dropped as a hint to be improved upon or rejected as circumstances point out and justify. I am &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

VALLEY FORGE, *March 8, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—Below you will receive a copy of my last, dated the 5th, to which I will add a thought which has occurred to me since the writing of it, and which, if the scheme is practicable at all, may add not a little to the success; namely, to let the officers and soldiers employed in the enterprise be dressed in red, and much in the taste of the British soldiery. Webb's regiment will afford these dresses; and it might not be amiss to know certainly the number of some regiment that is quartered in the city. Under some circumstances this knowledge may avail them, especially if the number on their buttons should correspond thereto.

P. S.—The official papers would be a vast acquisition and might without difficulty accompany the person.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

For some reason no attempt was made at this time to carry the scheme into execution, but in 1780, on Christmas day, Major Humphreys with three officers and twenty-seven volunteers made the attempt, but without success, a strong north wind making a landing impossible.

The following letter from Parsons to Governor Trumbull shows his watchfulness, forethought, care, activity and profound interest in the cause in which he was engaged:—

FISHKILL, *February 27, 1778.*

SIR.—The distress of the southern army is doubtless made known to your Excellency. No mode of relief will be left untried to relieve them; the provisions on the border of your State and of New York cannot be removed without the aid of teams, and the army must perish without them; and the teams cannot be furnished in this State. 'Tis too late to speculate about the matter; without the immediate coercive force of your government, in my opinion, the army is ruined. I must, therefore, earnestly entreat your Excellency to issue orders to impress necessary teams for the purpose of removing provisions &c. to the North River, and that the order may be transmitted to this Post without delay that I may be enabled to know what measures to take in pursuance thereof.

I am &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Trumbull.

It was the terrible winter of 1777-8, the gloomiest period of the whole war. Washington's army, half clad and scantily fed, was shivering and starving in the rude huts of Valley Forge. Without speedy relief it must disband. In this crisis, while Gates and Lee and Conway were selfishly plotting to deprive Washington of his command, Parsons, alive to the danger, with patriotic zeal was arousing his native State to renewed exertions and using all the means within his power to forward provisions to the suffering troops. This letter was communicated by the Governor to the General Assembly, whereupon it was

Resolved by the Assembly, it being represented by General Parsons, the 27th of February, 1778, that teams were needed for transportation of provisions from this State to King's Ferry for use of the troops, that it be the duty of any justice of the peace in Fairfield or Litchfield Counties to impress teams on application of General Parsons.

West Point, February 28, 1778, General Parsons having written to Henry Laurens, President of Congress, asking whether, in view of the resolution of Congress, "that no deserter or prisoner of war can be recruited in our services," such recruiting can be punished, on the 8th of March issued the following order to the officers in his Department:—

CAMP WEST POINT, *March 8, 1778.*

All the officers not on the recruiting service, and soldiers belonging to the several regiments in the brigade under my command, who have been absent on furloughs which are now expired, are to join their respective regiments without loss of time. This order is to be considered as most peremptory, and no excuse but inability will be admitted for want of compliance.

And whereas there are many deserters from General Howe's army and from the troops lately commanded by General Burgoyne, some prisoners of war who have been suffered to remain at large, and divers suspicious or disaffected persons strolling about the country, who are daily offering themselves for enlistment, the several commissioned and non-commissioned officers now on the recruiting service, are directed and ordered in the most positive terms not to enlist any persons of the above description or give certificates

concerning such persons if hired for the purpose of exempting any inhabitants of these States from military duty.

And the gentlemen employed by the legislatures of the States for promoting the recruiting service, are desired to take notice of the above prohibition, and regulate their conduct accordingly.

SAMUEL H. PARSONS,
Brigadier General.

Poughkeepsie, March 26, 1778, Governor Clinton writes General Parsons introducing the illustrious Polish patriot and general, Kosciusko, then a young officer of engineers:—

DEAR SIR.—Enclosed you have a return of the artillery at Albany which in point of size falls extremely short of what I have had reason to expect and is imagined by the Board of War. It seems few of the heavy pieces, which alone would have been serviceable for the defense of the River, have been brought forward. They were, it seems, sent for, but too late. The ill-contrived intended northern expedition occasioned the delay.

Colonel Kuziazke, who by a resolve of Congress is directed to act as engineer at the Works for the security of the River, will deliver you this. I believe you will find him an ingenuous young man and disposed to do everything he can in the most agreeable manner.

If you have any news, pray communicate it to me.

Your most obed't. servt.,

To General Parsons. GEO. CLINTON.

General Parsons was stationed at or near West Point during the greater part of the years 1778 and 1779, but was frequently detached upon expeditions to protect the sea coast of his native State near Greenwich, New Haven and New London. How attractive the officers of his brigade found the West Point of that day may be inferred from the following letter written by Parsons to his friend, Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth of Connecticut, soon after he assumed the command of that Post:—

CAMP AT WEST POINT, *Feb. 22, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 9th inst. I received by Col. Hughes, and thank you for the care you have taken of me. You ask me where I can be found? This is a puzzling question; the camp is at a place on Hudson's River called West Point, opposite where Fort Constitution once stood. The situation is past description, surrounded with almost inaccessible mountains, and craggy

rocks which overtop the highest hills, at present covered with piles of snow; the river in our front affords a beautiful prospect on our right and left to New Windsor on one hand and to Fort Montgomery on the other with some little islands interspersed. The surrounding prospect affords as great variety of hills, mountains, rocks, which seem to shut up every avenue to us, and of swamps, meadows, deep valleys which obstruct the passage of the traveler and of small beautiful plains in a good degree of cultivation intermixed, as almost any place I have seen; to a contemplative mind which delights in a lonely retreat from the world to view and admire the stupendous and magnificent works of nature, 'tis as beautiful as Sharon, but affords to a man who loves the society of the world a prospect nearly allied to the shades of death; here I am to be found at present in what situation of mind you will easily imagine. Mr. Dwight and Major Humphreys are now here, and a good companion now and then adds to the number of my agreeable family.

News arrives here by accident only. The account of Burgoyne's defeat reached the ears of administration via Carleton about the 5th of December. (I dare say 'twas sent by him with expedition and good relish.) The nation was put into a great consternation, but after three or four days recovered their surprise and voted 20,000 additional troops about the 8th of December.

I am heartily glad Col. DeLancey has returned, the more so as the gentry of this State were flushed with hopes he would violate his honor and act the base part they wished; though at present he cannot be exchanged, nothing on my part shall be omitted to render the state of a prisoner as easy to him as a man of honor has reason to expect; my compliments await him, with my wishes that his personal enemies may never have greater cause to triumph over him than his present conduct has afforded. Col. Webb, I hear, will not be exchanged at present; perhaps 'tis right. I earnestly wish to know what we are about in Connecticut, what prospects of filling and supporting our army &c.

The Major Humphreys he mentions, is David Humphreys, the poet-soldier of the Revolution and later on the Aid and confidential friend of Washington. The previous spring he had been appointed Brigade Major or Assistant Adjutant General on Parsons' staff, and was now serving in that capacity. In the following extract from a poem written by him entitled, "The Happiness of America," he alludes to his staff service with Parsons:—

"I too, perhaps, should Heaven prolong my date,
The oft-repeated tale shall oft relate;
Shall tell the feelings in the first alarms,
Of some bold enterprise th' unequalled charms;
Shall tell from whom I learnt the martial art,
With what high chiefs I play'd my early part,
With Parsons first, whose eye with piercing ken,
Reads through their hearts the characters of men:
Then how I aided, in the foll'wing scene,
Death-daring Putnam—then immortal Greene—
Then how great Washington my youth approved,
In rank prefer'd, and as a parent loved."

The Mr. Dwight referred to in the letter is the Rev. Timothy Dwight, the distinguished theologian and scholar, afterwards President of Yale College and at this time Chaplain of Parsons' brigade. In May, 1777, Congress limited the number of chaplains to one to each brigade. They were to be appointed by Congress on the recommendation of the brigade commander, and to have a colonel's pay and rations. On the 6th of October, 1777, Mr. Dwight received his appointment, presumably upon Parsons' recommendation and perhaps at the suggestion of Humphreys who was Dwight's college friend. The spiritual wants of the brigade do not appear to have taken up all the chaplain's time, for in March, 1778, he writes to Washington for permission to dedicate to him a poem, "The Conquest of Canaan by Joshua," published in 1785. The following is his letter:—

WEST POINT, *March 8, 1778.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.—The application which is the subject of this letter, is, I believe, not common in these American regions, yet I hope it will not on that account be deemed impertinence or presumption. For several years I have been employed in writing a poem on the Conquest of Canaan by Joshua. This poem, upon the first knowledge of your Excellency's character, I determined, with leave, to inscribe to you. If it will not be too great a favor, it will certainly be remembered with gratitude.

I am not insensible that the subject of this request is delicate; as consent on the part of your Excellency cannot possibly add to your reputation, and may be followed by consequences of a disagreeable nature. Of the merit or demerit of the work, your Excellency can-

not form a guess but from the character of the writer, with which you will be made acquainted by General Parsons, who does me the honor to enclose this in one from himself. All that I can say upon the subject (and I hope I may assert it with propriety) is, that I am so independent a Republican, and so honest a man, as to be incapable of a wish to palm myself upon the world under the patronage of another, as to be remote from any sinister view in this application, and to disdain making the proffer, slight as it is, to the most splendid personage, for whose character I have not a particular esteem. I am with the greatest respect,

Your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, JR.

This letter was enclosed in one from General Parsons to General Washington, in which the General expresses his high appreciation of his Chaplain:—

He is [writes Parsons] a person of extensive literature, an amiable private character, and has happily united that virtue and piety which ought ever to form the character of a gentleman, with the liberal and generous sentiments and agreeable manners of a gentleman. Of the merits of the performance he mentions, I am not a competent judge. Many gentlemen of learning and taste for poetical writings who have examined it with care and attention, esteem this work in the class of the best writings of the kind. He will be particularly obliged to your Excellency if it shall make its first appearance under your patronage.

WEST POINT, *March 7, 1778.*

Ten days afterwards Washington replied to Mr. Dwight's application as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY FORGE, *18th March, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I yesterday received your favor of the 8th inst., accompanied by so warm a recommendation from General Parsons, that I cannot but form favorable presages of the merits of the work you propose to honor me with the dedication of. Nothing can give me more pleasure than to patronize the essays of genius, and a laudable cultivation of the arts and sciences which had begun to flourish in so eminent a degree before the hand of oppression was stretched over our devoted country. And I shall esteem myself happy, if a poem, which has employed the labor of years, will derive

any advantage, or bear more weight in the world, by making its appearance under a dedication to me.

Dwight and Humphreys were at this time twenty-six years old; Parsons was nearly forty-one. In the brigade were Colonel Wyllys, Lieut. Colonels Grosvenor and Sherman, Major Gray and several junior officers, all, as well as Dwight and Humphreys, Yale men. With such a surrounding of the "blue," it is perhaps not surprising that Parsons, a Harvard man, should have desired to add "a good companion now and then to his agreeable family." There were also in the camp employed as engineers on the fortifications, Colonel Rufus Putnam and the Polish patriot, Kosciusko, who was retained in preference to Colonel La Radière at the desire of General Parsons and Governor Clinton. The Fort on the high grounds back of the Point, is said to have been built by Putnam's regiment during the Spring of 1778.

CHAPTER XV

At West Point. Correspondence with Generals McDougall and Gates. Arrest of Oliver DeLancey. Letter to Dr. William Walter. Parsons Joins Washington's Army at White Plains.

March—August, 1778

Since the capture of Forts Montgomery and Clinton and the ravages of the enemy on the upper Hudson, a strong opposition had grown up among the people of the State of New York to the military administration of General Putnam in the Highlands. Good-natured and easy-going, without the energy and decision of his early years, to his careless and inefficient management was charged the seemingly unnecessary delay in constructing the defenses at West Point. This feeling had become so general, that it was impossible to obtain from the inhabitants the necessary assistance while he remained even the nominal head of the Department. Chancellor Livingston, expressing in a letter to Washington the general dissatisfaction, wrote, January 14, 1778:—

> Unfortunately for him the current of popular opinion in this and the neighboring States, and, so far as I can learn, in the troops under his command, runs strongly against him. For my own part, I respect his bravery and former services, and sincerely lament, that his patriotism will not suffer him to take that repose to which his advanced age and past services justly entitle him.

To this letter Washington replied on the 12th of March:—

> Proper measures are taking to carry on the inquiry into the loss of Fort Montgomery agreeable to the direction of Congress, and it is more than probable, from what I have heard, that the issue of the inquiry will afford just grounds for the removal of General Putnam, but whether it does or not, the prejudices of all ranks in that quarter against him are so great, that he must at all events be prevented from returning. I hope to introduce a gentleman in his

place, if the general course of the service will admit of it, who will be perfectly agreeable to the State and to the public. In the meantime I trust that General Parsons will do everything in his power to carry on the Works, which, from his last accounts, are in more forwardness than I expected.

Feeling that the public interests required that the general control and direction of all the Posts in the Highlands should be vested in one officer, and he of the highest rank, Washington, on the 16th, ordered Major General McDougall to repair thither and assume the chief command. At the same time he asked Congress to resolve the doubt raised by General Parsons as to the authority of the commandant for the time being to do whatever might be necessary in the construction of the Works, in view of the previous resolutions in favor of Generals Gates and Clinton.

On the same day he wrote Putnam announcing the appointment of McDougall, and relieving him from the command:—

My reason for making the change is owing to the prejudices of the people, which, whether well or ill grounded, must be indulged; and I should think myself wanting in justice to the public and candor towards you, were I to continue you in a command, after I have been almost in direct terms informed, that the people of the State of New York will not render the necessary support and assistance, while you remain at the head of that Department. When the inquiry is finished, I desire that you will return to Connecticut and superintend the forwarding on the new levies with the greatest expedition.

Two days afterwards Washington wrote to Parsons, acknowledging his letter of the 7th, enclosing that of Mr. Dwight, and replying to his statement of the perplexities in which, by the several resolutions and orders, the whole business of the construction of the Works was involved, and advised him of McDougall's appointment, as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS, *March 18, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I am favored with yours of the 7th, enclosing a letter from Rev. Mr. Dwight, to whom I have written on the matter proposed by him.

I am sorry to hear that any seeming inconsistency in my letters should, among other things, have retarded the execution of the Works, but if you will revert to my letters of the 2d and 27th of

December, you will find that my orders were express to keep the troops, meaning the main body of them, steadily to work. I mentioned a liberty of sending out light parties towards the Plains, because they were necessary, not only to curb small foraging parties of the enemy, but for the security of the Camp.

To reconcile all matters and to obviate the jealousies that, whether well or ill founded, had taken place, I have ordered General McDougall to take the command at the Highlands, and vested him with full powers to superintend the whole, at least until Congress have determined whether the command of the Forts and the superintendency of the Works shall be distinct and independent of that Department. I am &c.,

G. WASHINGTON.

To General Parsons.

On the 28th of March, Major General McDougall assumed command of the Northern Department, including the Highlands, but General Parsons appears to have remained in command at West Point. On the 31st, Washington wrote General McDougall as follows:—

VALLEY FORGE, *March 31, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—That part of the troops at New York have left that place, admits of no doubt. The accounts of the number vary from 2300 to 2500, all of whom, there is reason to believe, have arrived at Philadelphia. . . . By report, Rhode Island was to be evacuated and the garrison brought to Philadelphia. This, if true, evidently proves that General Howe intends an early campaign to take advantage of our weak state. What is to be done? We must either oppose our whole force to his in this quarter, or take advantage of him in some other, which leads me to ask your opinion of the practicability of an attempt on New York with Parsons' brigade, Nixon's and the regiments of Van Schaick, Hazen and James Livingston, aided by the militia from the States of New York and Connecticut, such I mean as can speedily be drawn together. On this subject and the advisableness of such an enterprise, I would have you consult Governor Clinton and General Parsons, and them only. It is unnecessary for me to add that the most profound secrecy should attend your operations if the scheme is adopted.

I am &c.,

To General McDougall. G. WASHINGTON.

April 13, General McDougall replied to General Washing-

ton, discouraging the enterprise, and for his reasons referred to the accompanying report of General Parsons and Governor Clinton:—

FISHKILL, *April 13, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I am honored with the receipt of your favors of the 31st ult. and 6th inst. The inclosures in the last have been forwarded agreeable to your orders.

No service would be more agreeable to me than an attack upon New York, could I recommend it consistent with any probable prospect of success. But the condition and strength of these Posts utterly forbid it; especially when the consequence of a misfortune in the attempt is duly considered, as it may effect the supplies to your army and the general influence of the campaign.

When I have more leisure I shall enumerate the reasons on which I give this opinion. For the present I beg leave to refer your Excellency to that of Governor Clinton and General Parsons. Mr. Kosciusko is esteemed by those who have attended the Works at West Point, to have more practice than Col. De la Radière, and his manner of treating the people more acceptable than that of the latter; which induced General Parsons and Governor Clinton to desire the former may be continued at West Point. The first has a commission as Engineer with the rank of Colonel in October 1776; Col De la Radière's commission I think is dated in November last.

The following is the report:—

That the regiment proposed be sent forward; that preparations be immediately made, with as much dispatch as possible to execute the whole or such part of the proposed plan as circumstances will admit of; that application be made to Governor Trumbull to know what number of the new made regiments can be had and at what time; that the Commissary-General be also applied to for an account of provisions &c. That the enterprise does not promise success by *Coup de Main* under present circumstances; but there may be great probability of its succeeding in the whole or in part within a month or five weeks if men and provisions can be had. The present state of the Posts for the defense of the North River does not admit withdrawing the troops for the proposed expedition immediately, but in a few weeks the Works may be in some state of defense, so as to be tenable with fewer men than at present and the consequences less fatal to the country in case of the expedition failing in the execution.

SAM'L H. PARSONS
GEO. CLINTON

To this letter Washington replied from Valley Forge, April 22:—

I am perfectly satisfied with your delay of the enterprise proposed by you, as I am certain it has been founded on substantial reasons. Congress, by their resolve of the 15th inst., directed General Gates to resume command of the Northern Department, and to repair forthwith to Fishkill for that purpose. I imagine he will proceed immediately thither. Upon his arrival there, I must desire you to return to the army and take command of your division. As Colonel Radière and Colonel Kosciusko will never agree, I think it will be best to order Radière to return, especially as you say Kosciusko is better adapted to the genius and temper of the people.

Governor Trumbull was very desirous that an attack should be made upon New York, and, on the 10th inst., had written Governor Clinton respecting the matter. Clinton replied, stating that such an expedition had been under consideration and gave the reasons which had induced its postponement:—

POUGHKEEPSIE, *May 1, 1778.*

SIR.—I am favored with your letter of the 10th ultimo.

An expedition against New York for the same reasons mentioned in your Excellency's letter, was suggested by his Excellency, General Washington and the practicability of it submitted to Generals McDougall, Parsons and myself. General Parsons, who soon after our consultation on the subject went into Connecticut, will have acquainted your Excellency with the result and the obstacles which prevented the carrying such expedition into immediate execution. These will soon be removed. The fortresses in the Highlands may soon be completed, or at least rendered defensible against a sudden assault. Grass will supply the want of forage and a sufficient magazine of provisions I am persuaded can be collected and the militia wish to engage in the service. This being the case, I conceive that at the end of a few weeks, there will not be any objections against a measure which, if successful, will be attended with the most salutary consequences, and if not fully executed, may be so conducted as at least to serve as a diversion favorable to General Washington.

I am &c.,
GEO. CLINTON.

To Governor Trumbull.

General Parsons replies to a note from General McDougall as follows:—

WEST POINT, *April 2, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I received your favor of this date and shall attend to the business recommended therein; the boat shall be sent up agreeable to your directions. If the accounts given by the spy are true, the five deserters sent you to day ought doubtless to be confined, as in that case there can be no question but they are on the same errand to spy out our situation.

Yr. obet. servt.,

To General McDougall. SAM. H. PARSONS.

General Parsons having advised General McDougall that several vessels had been seen coming up the river with the apparent intention of attacking, or at least reconnoitering the Works at West Point, McDougall directed him to defend the position to the last, and said that he had sent Nixon's regiment to his aid:—

HEADQUARTERS, FISHKILL, *4th April, 1778.*

SIR.—I received yours of 25 minutes past 8 o'clock of this morning. Those vessels are probably coming up to reconnoiter the state of your Works, whatever may be their object. The completing the Works and Obstructions are of so much importance, that you must defend the Ground to the utmost of your power, for should the enemy destroy those Works and Barracks, the completing the Works and Obstructions cannot be accomplished this campaign. If the enemy should appear in tolerable force, your strength should be disposed in the best position to defend West Point. I shall be obliged to risk the Post here to the defence of the militia till the Continental troops arrive from below and Albany; you did right to order the stores from King's Ferry. Mr. Mudock has sent off a number of stores to you this morning; if the 18 pound cartridges are not sent, I have ordered my Aid to him to despatch them with the whale boat and 24 rounds of musket cartridges for 700 men. A mortar will be of little use to you against a ship, as her movement, even when she is at anchor, is so various with wind and tide. The howitzer which you have will be of more use to you. A good lookout as far down the River as your boats can go with safety, and the inclosing the Work should be steadily pursued. If their three vessels should come near, your scouts should be sent out on both sides of the River where it is probable they may land a small party to reconnoiter the state of your Works. These are the general

objects I wish you to attend to. I have this morning wrote for Col. Nixon's regiment and suggested to Governor Clinton the necessity of having the militia in a state of readiness. If the enemy visit you soon, I shall do everything in my power for your relief; you have now all the force I can give you unless I call the militia out. And if this is done upon the appearance of three vessels, they will not turn out so readily when they may be wanted for serious service. Captain Sloo with his men and boats are so exposed to be cut off by a small party from those vessels, or any other, that I wish you to order him to send up all the boats and scows except two, and their crews to Fishkill Landing, and in case he finds himself in danger to remove there to the Fly, as I have no guard to give him. The return of the Corps at West Point will be made every Friday, and the Command particularly designated at the return. If you can send to him by water, cause the enclosed to be delivered to Major Thearse.

I am in haste, Your Humble Servant,

ALEX. McDOUGALL.

To General Parsons.

In the latter part of April, General Parsons went to Lyme in Connecticut, his native town, whence, on the 27th, he wrote to General McDougall respecting the condition of the Commissary Department in that State and the proposed attack upon New York, as follows:—

LYME, *27th April, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I have carefully examined the state of provisions in the Commissary Department, and believe the meat in this State already purchased will supply the army to about the 10th of June, from which there will be some distress in the army for that article for some short time, perhaps to the middle of July, unless supplied from other States, southward and westward of this. Governor Trumbull is very desirous to pursue the proposed attack on New York, and will do what any man can do to forward the design. He desires the troops may not be called for until our preparations are made, that they may be detained as little time as possible; but in the interim he would wish to be informed early whether the design is pursued or laid aside. The important advice from France and the evident distress of Britain, in my opinion, affords us the best opportunity of attacking the enemy with the fairest prospects of success; long delays I fear will be detrimental, especially when the insidious arts of the British Court have begun to be practiced,

and may have too baneful an influence if they are suffered to continue long in their present state. I wish to hear from your Honor by return of post, that if my continuance in this State any longer can be of any public utility, I may receive your orders; otherwise, I believe I shall be able to return in about a fortnight. If we make the proposed attack, I am of opinion I shall be of more service by staying here till the order is made and the levies nearly completed which are expected from this State, than I can be at your Post."

I am &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To General McDougall.

On the 22d of May, General Parsons, having returned from Connecticut to West Point, wrote General Washington regarding one, Hammell, and the enemy's force in New York, as learned from deserters, refugees, spies and the inhabitants; also as to the condition of the defenses at West Point.

About the middle of May, General Gates assumed command of the Northern Department. By the resolution of Congress appointing him to this command, he had been invested with extensive powers for completing the Works on the North River, and had, also, been "authorized to carry on operations against the enemy if any favorable opportunity should occur"; but to guard against the insubordination displayed by him after the Burgoyne campaign, he was at the same time enjoined "not to undertake any expedition against New York without previously consulting the Commander-in-Chief."

The four following letters relate to the capture of young Oliver DeLancey, the successor of Major André as Sir Henry Clinton's Adjutant General, of whom we shall hear more later on.

HARRISON'S PRECINCTS, *May 22, 1778.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR, SIR.—That on the 20th inst. a detachment under my command proceeded to West Chester at Willets' Point at a house now occupied by one, Oliver DeLancey, a person whom Col. Miggs had orders from his Honour, General Parsons, to make a prisoner (as I was informed) which Col. Miggs sent off a detachment in order to take said DeLancey, but was disappointed by reason that Mr. DeLancey was absent from his native place of abode. Therefore, on the 20th of this instant, he happily fell into my hands, which I have the pleasure to convey by Lieut.

Wattles to your Honour, but as for the character of said Mr. DeLancey, undoubtedly General Parsons will acquaint your Honour with. Therefore, I have the pleasure to subscribe myself,

Your Honour's most obdt. servt.

To Governor Clinton. THOMAS BARNES *Capt.*

WHITE PLAINS, *May 23, 1778.*

Col. Morris Graham, stationed there, writes to General Gates regarding Oliver DeLancey, "that all reports from our friends in the enemy's power agree that he has always acted friendly. Since I have commanded at this Post, Mr. DeLancey has never kept out of the way; so far from it, he sent me word when I first came here, that if he was in any way suspected and I would acquaint him with it, he would appear."

HEADQUARTERS, FISHKILL, *May 24, 1778.*

SIR.—Mr. Frederick Jay brings to your Excellency, Mr. Oliver DeLancey, whom the General considers as a prisoner of this State; and I am commanded to request your Excellency will give such orders respecting him as your Excellency may think proper. I have the honor to be with the greatest respect, Sir,

Your Excellency's most humble obet. servt.,

ROBERT TROUP *A. D. C. to Gen. Gates.*

To Governor Clinton.

POUGHKEEPSIE, *May 25, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—I received your letter by Mr. Jay, who called upon me this morning with Oliver DeLancey, Jr. Though I have heard many circumstances in favor of Mr. DeLancey, yet, at this critical juncture, I have thought it most advisable to consider him a prisoner and have accordingly put him upon his parole at a place called "the city" in this County, about twenty miles east of this—a very safe place inhabited by good subjects. I have promised him that orders should be given to preserve his stock and effects from being taken by our people in his absence, and that his horse, now in Capt. Barnes possession, should be delivered up to Mr. Stevens or Col. Thomas of Westchester County for his use, which you will oblige me by so doing.

DeLancey is a very bad name.

I am with greatest respect,

GEO. CLINTON.

To Major General Gates.

The following is from Parsons to his friend Colonel Wadsworth in Hartford:—

WEST POINT, *May 25, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—The designs of the enemy are yet a secret. It is the opinion that they intend leaving Philadelphia. Three ships, a galley and cutter are at King's Ferry. This seems inexplicable, as one ship will effectually stop that passage as well as a greater number. I have sent a boat to Fort Lee to see what they are about at Fort Washington. When I make any discoveries of importance I will let you know. I know you are wondering how we like General Gates. I can only answer, he appears to be satisfactory, but a Washington is still our preference. We had the alliance with France celebrated at the Point. The Duke was uncommonly gay and Dr. Cooper in the meridian of his glory never poured forth so great a shower of puns as came from our friend in his nocturnal cogitations. Yours &c.,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

To Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth, Hartford.

On the 31st, General Parsons advises General Gates, the Commander of the Department, of the report brought by his Adjutant, Major Humphreys, as to the number and disposition of the troops in New York, as follows:—

WEST POINT, *31 May, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—Major Humphreys has just returned and reports that the 52d regiment commanded by Col. French, marched from New York the 23d inst. and encamped near Kingsbridge in a line with the 45th. The 71st regiment has arrived at the Bridge from Long Island; the regiments of the Hereditary Prince, Prince Charles of Trumback of Stein, are all the foreign troops he could learn remained on York Island; two of which are in the Bowery near the city, and two near Kingsbridge; the 38th British regiment is in the city; most, if not all, the new levies are marched from the Bridge to the city about eight days since; part of them embarked on board ships at Horn's Hook; the public report is they are going to Long Island to replace the troops which have been called from thence to the Bridge. 'Tis publicly reported that a French war actually exists at this time; the press was very hot in New York; the accounts of the numbers obtained in this way are various from 250 to 1000, however, they all agree they are for the sea service and are put on ship board. A considerable number of shipping were in the East

River a few days since, and the evening of the 29th a fleet from New York came to anchor in the Sound near Hart Island opposite East Chester and New Rochelle, supposed to be about 20 or 30 ships; a press is expected every day upon Long Island; the Refugees are concealing themselves to avoid it.

All communication with the city has been prohibited for some time, evidently to cover their movements; this being effected, the inhabitants are again permitted to pass over the Bridge with provisions &c. On the whole, 'tis pretty evident, instead of collecting a force at the Bridge, their strength is lessened, and the new levies have doubtless business in some other quarter; a paper of the 25th of May from New York I have sent you. When I have the honor to wait on you I shall be able to give some more particular accounts.

I understand you design to visit the troops at Peekskill to-day, and I shall therefore call upon you in the morning."

I am &c.,

To General Gates. SAM. H. PARSONS.

June 4th, Parsons writes to Gates respecting the artillery:—

WEST POINT, *4th of June, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The artillerists at the Point are by no means sufficient in number to manage the artillery here. Col. Stevens' three companies may be very usefully employed at this Post. Their numbers will enable us to put the artillery in a proper state. If no special purpose is to be answered by removing them to the Village, I shall be much obliged by Col. Stevens and his men remaining at this Post for the present. If any companies of the train are wanted at the Village more than are now there, a company of Col. Lamb's regiment perhaps, on many accounts, had better be sent. That regiment has been in contention from their raising, and I am certain Captain Moody and Colonel Stevens will never agree in the same camp. As soon as the weather will permit, 'twill be necessary for them to encamp; if your Honor shall be of opinion the service will be as well advanced by their continuing here as removing, I should be happy in his receiving your order to take his post at this place.

Will it be necessary to publish in General Orders that Colonel Stevens commands the Artillery? Many unhappy disputes may be prevented by it." I am &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To General Gates.

On the 8th of June General Parsons writes to General Gates respecting affairs in New York:—

WEST POINT, *June 8, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—By the information of deserters and the concurring accounts of inhabitants near the Bridge, there are three Hessian and two British regiments in the city; one battalion of Highlanders at Bloomingdale; at Fort Washington and the Bridge, two British regiments, viz: the 45th and 52d, two Hessian regiments, Bruverton's and Bayard's regiments and Emerick's Chasseurs; one 12 and 6 pounders in Fort Independence; two of 18, two of 12 and five of 6 and under, in Fort Washington. The cannon removed from the embrasures in Fort Washington on the side next the North River. Fort Independence not picketed but an abatis around it; a captain's guard kept in the fort relieved every three days; in the redoubts are guards from twenty-five to thirty-six men. By the information of returning refugees, it appears the enemy are establishing a camp at the head of the Fly on Long Island. Cruger's, Ludlow's, Fanning's and a regiment of Brown's brigade are to encamp there, perhaps one thousand men. A regiment of regular Tories at Brookline, I suppose the 35th; this regiment received orders last Tuesday to march eastward on the Island, and their heavy baggage to be put on ship board; by the information of Jos. Lawrence and Samuel Riker, from New York, two British regiments received orders to embark the 6th inst., but where destined is uncertain. No particular information of Robinson's regiment. I think it probable they still remain at Harlem. The ships are thinly manned and cannot remove without increasing the number of hands. Those at Huntington are ordered ready to sail some time next week. The enemy are strengthening their Works on Bayard's Hill, but in what manner I am unable to learn. On the whole matter it appears evident to me the enemy are not preparing to make any capital attack on the country, but are securing themselves from any attempt we may make in the city.

The camp at the Fly on Long Island I think well chosen to defend the city on that part. 'Tis about eight or nine miles from the Ferry, and from the creek near the camp to Jamaica Bay on the south side of the Island, about five miles; and the passes through the mountains are effectually secured by this Post which leaves it exceeding difficult to move forward to Brooklyn with any artillery; and will enable the enemy to send occasional parties down the

Island and compel what supplies and provisions and forage from Suffolk County can be spared. I believe that County can feed three thousand men six months.

I am &c.,

To General Gates. SAM. H. PARSONS.

About the middle of April there arrived in New York a draft of Lord North's "Conciliatory Bill," so called, containing a new project submitted by him to Parliament for settling the differences between Great Britain and the United States. Having been received by Congress, it was unanimously resolved, "that the terms offered are totally inadequate, and that no advances on the part of the British Government for a peace would be met, unless, as a preliminary step, they either withdrew their armies and fleets, or acknowledged unequivocally the independence of the United States." May 10, 1778, General Parsons wrote to Colonel Webb, who was still a prisoner in the hands of the British, informing him of the action of the Ministry, as having a possible bearing on the question of his speedy release:—

DEAR SIR.—I have enclosed you the Crisis No. 5; the draft of a bill once read in one House of the British Parliament, which is called the Conciliatory Plan of the British Ministry; the answer of Congress refusing to treat on any other condition than an unconditional acknowledgement on the part of Great Britain of the independence of the United States, and also, the terms of the treaty with France, I should have sent you, but have mislaid them. The substance you may find in the enclosed hand-bill.

Be patient. I hope you will soon find that peace restored to these States which every good man wishes, both lasting and honorable. Your friends are well. My compliments to your fellow prisoners.

I am &c.,

To Colonel Samuel B. Webb. S. H. PARSONS.

In June, while on the seacoast, he again writes Webb, as follows:—

HORSENECK, *June 7, 1778.*

DEAR COLONEL.—I am occasionally at this place. I find Mr. Drummond going to New York, who is kind enough to engage to deliver to you this letter. As I shall return in the morning to West

Point, I have not time to give you much information, nor would it be proper, as this will probably pass into such hands as are not entitled to information from me. Your friends are anxious for your return. Conciliatory Acts of Parliament come too late after so much bloodshed and waste of treasure. Perhaps there might be reconciliation if Commissioners were empowered to recognize our national independence. Our friend, Mr. Hosmer, and family are well and express concern often for you and other prisoners.

I am &c.,

To Colonel S. B. Webb. S. H. PARSONS.

The following communication was written in reply to two letters from Rev. Dr. William Walter, an old and intimate friend of Parsons, a classmate at Harvard and formerly Rector of Trinity Church in Boston, who, not finding the atmosphere of his old home congenial after the departure of the British, had removed with his familly to New York. Walter's letters have not been preserved, but they seem to have dealt largely upon the advantages to be secured by a reconciliation, and expressed great regret that the offer of Lord North's Commissioners had not been accepted and an end put to this unhappy war. Had Parsons been endowed with prophetic vision, he could not have discerned the future more certainly, or perceived the true interests of Britain more clearly, than he did when penning his reply:—"I fully believe," he says, "we shall establish that independency we have been compelled to declare; and this event, in my opinion, does not rest on the consent of Britain or the assistance of France. Our internal resources are sufficient to continue this war as long as can be necessary to attain this end, and we are better able to pay our national debt than Britain can ever be to discharge her own. We have boundless tracts of uncultivated land, a great source of wealth to our nation. You are confined to an island already in an high state of cultivation, and have little more to expect. We shall increase in numbers, wealth and vigor, when you have already reached the zenith of your power. . . . I own freely, I do not wish to see Great Britain reduced so low as to become a small weight in the political scale of Europe. When she sees her true interest, this war will cease, and that mutual

intercourse again take place which was and will be the only source of wealth she ought to derive from us."

December 12th, 1778.

DEAR SIR.—I thank you for your kind letter of the 27th November, and copy of that of the 14th September.

Your opinions are always heard by me with the candor of a friend, and have the advantage of being addressed to one who has a most cordial affection for the writer and can make every reasonable allowance for the motives operating on the passions of my friend whose character from early life I have fully known and to whose honest intentions I give full credit. I have read with attention your sentiments of the contest at this time—they can be of no public advantage nor can they affect my own conduct. The Commissioners having executed their trust and gone back to report the inefficacy of their overtures and reasoning, can now have no influence on public measures. The appeal to arms has long since been made and argument gives way to the fate of war. However, for our private amusement, I will spend a leisure hour at any time in fully exchanging our sentiments on the public measures of the contending powers and the true interests of the two countries, so far as may be safe for us in our several situations in life. In a personal interview, I should be much more happy, for then I could freely unbosom myself in the confidence of friendship. I freely own the offers of Great Britain are such as once would have satisfied the claims of every Colony now in the Confederacy, but your conclusion can in no measure be just that they now ought to be accepted, were it not for the French alliance. The supremacy of Parliament was what we originally denied, and that claim caused the present war. The injuries we received by extending that claim were all we asked to be redressed in, but can you convince yourself that after three years of war, in which we have lost thousands of our youth and expended two millions of our treasure, in which time our towns have been laid in ashes, in some instances, wantonly, and attended with such circumstances as would provoke the resentments of the most unfeeling mind; after our wives and infant children have been sacrificed to the brutal rage of the savages, stimulated to those acts of barbarity by the unrelenting cruelty of a British Ministry, can you, I say, convince yourself the controversy is now in the same state it was in 1775. At that, what was the extent of our just claims at that time, is the measure of our rights at this day. I freely tell you I am of a very different opinion, and were France

sunk into everlasting oblivion, the conduct of the British Court since the nineteenth of April, 1775, will be a just bar to a reunion with Great Britain in any degree of subordination. You say every office of honor and profit are accessible to men of abilities, as well Americans as Britons; that we shall derive greater benefits from our reunion than from a state of independency; our expenses of Ambassadors, Envoys, Consuls, &c., will be saved us; our trade protected, &c. These are reasons which ought to have their weight, and doubtless have been duly considered in estimating the profit and loss of a separation or union with Great Britain again. How far the expenses of government will be balanced by our enlarged commerce, is a subject I am not so competent a judge in, as of some other parts of the contest, and, therefore, shall leave that to others whose knowledge is greater in those matters than my own. You add, "our honor is pledged (to France); we cannot return;" and ar'nt you of the same opinion, my friend? I confess myself one of those deluded mortals who believe public faith as sacred as private agreements, and that 'tis as inconsistent with the honor of a nation to recede from the one, as it is to the moral or civil character of a private gentleman to violate the other.

But, Sir, you are mistaken when you assert this alliance was formed after the Court of Great Britain had fully conceded all our original claims. 'Tis a fact France had agreed to the Articles of our Alliance in December; that the treaty was signed the 7th of February, and the concessions not made by Britain till the 17th of the same month; but 'tis equally true, we did in the most solemn manner declare we had not the most distant intention of separating from Great Britain; for the sincerity of this declaration at the time when t'was made, I appeal to your own knowledge of the country. I am certain it was not at that time the most distant wish of the country to be separated from Great Britain, nor would anything but force on their part and necessity on ours, have compelled us to this measure. There truly is a delicacy due to our words and actions, but, Sir, is it not bad reasoning to infer from an unwillingness on our part to become a distinct people, an eternal obligation to remain connected under all circumstances and in all possible events, and to submit our estates, our liberties and lives to the will of Britain? When she governed us with justice, we wished to remain part of the empire; when she altered her measures, we were no longer bound. I agree with you that reasons of state govern the nations of the earth, but I feel a delicacy which forbids my full assent to the sentiments you seem to convey, and have some doubt whether 'tis strictly righteous and honorable to violate the

most solemn public engagements for reasons of state, and feel a delicacy which forbids my full assent to this sentiment which seems to meet the approbation of so worthy a character. But if this principle be admitted, there is an end of the first part of the question. The right of Britain on one side and the duty of the Colonists on the other, have nothing to do in the controversy nor in any engagements either of them have entered into of any consideration. But reasons of state, or, in other words, the interest of this Country, is only to be considered by us, and when we find it our interest, undoubtedly we shall accept the terms held out by the Commissioners. Whether Great Britain will live without us depends on events not yet known; that she will not at present choose to live without us, I fully believe, and I own freely, I do not wish to see Great Britain reduced so low as to become of small weight in the political scale of Europe. When she sees her true interest, this war will cease and that mutual intercourse again take place which was and will be the only source of wealth she ought to derive from us.

I have no talent at prophecy, nor do I concern myself with future events further than doing my duty is connected with them. I know an almost unbounded field is open to conjecture, when we look forward and compare the probable events on each side which may take place before the conclusion of the war. On our part, the amount of the personal estate of Britain can have little consideration, when the whole amount little more than pays the annual interest of the national debt; when more than the whole personal estate of the kingdom must be annually called for in taxes to pay the interest of the debt and defray the charges of government at this time. This cannot be effected very many years without the aid of Foreign Powers. We have alone withstood the power of Britain; you have employed almost the whole force of the nation against us without a check from any European nation, and have not succeeded. A greater force was never employed out of the Kingdom by Great Britain since the Revolution than that which you have employed to subdue us, without effect, and that, when we, in point of numbers, military preparation and discipline, were far inferior to our present state. However the French nation may be considered by you, this is certain, our alliance with that nation and a consequent war increases your expenses and the necessity of a greater force in Europe than the Kingdom wanted when at peace. The subjects lost in this war, you say are not so great as the immigration would have been in a time of peace, and from thence you will infer a proper reason for continuing it. I believe the immigration would have

been very numerous, and perhaps greater than your actual loss, but this is a total loss to yourselves and the world, the other only employing that number of men in cultivating that country which was and will be the source of your wealth and the fountain of happiness to her inhabitants; and when you see it your interest to share the profits of our commerce without the charges of sovereignty, to reap the fruits of our labor without the expense of protection, then, and not till then, will this war, which has so unhappily divided us, be ended.

"What," you ask, "has the mighty fleet of France done to save us? Have they not fled before that fleet they boasted to annihilate?" They have engaged your fleet to watch their motions and, from an offensive war, have confined you to your garrisoned places, and have not fled before that fleet they boasted to annihilate. 'Tis true the skill of our able sea officers, whose bravery and humanity are equally acknowledged and esteemed by us, has saved Rhode Island, but the misfortune of the French fleet arose, not from the courage of Britons or from Gallic cowardice, but the winds and the seas occasioned disasters in which both fleets were large sharers. In short, my friend, I fully believe we shall establish that independency we have been compelled to declare. I believe it the true interest of Britain to acknowledge it and stop the further effusion of blood. Neither does this event, in my opinion, rest on the consent of Britain or the assistance of France. Our internal resources are sufficient to continue this war as long as can be necessary to attain the end, and we are better able to pay our national debt than Britain can ever be to discharge her own. We owe little but to ourselves, and can never be the poorer in paying it. A large share of your debt is due out of the nation and must impoverish you in the discharge of it. We have boundless tracts of uncultivated lands, a great source of wealth to our Nation. You are confined to an island already in a high state of cultivation and have little more to expect. We shall increase in number, wealth and vigor when you have already reached your zenith of power, and every man of candor acknowledges with concern that your sun is fast setting into comparative obscurity; and though you should continue in your full strength, you must still pass the Atlantic and wait your supplies from that distant country on every failure or misfortune here; and, although you have yet met no considerable disaster in the attempt, you cannot have reasonable assurances that your supplies of men, provisions, arms, money, &c., will always continue free from the accidents so often experienced on that uncertain element. You have the evidence of yourselves to convince you that a defeat

to us proves but a stimulus to an immediate reinforcement, and, on every misfortune, we have doubled our numbers before you could avail yourselves of any important advantage; and I assure you on my honor, I believe the Country is, at this hour, as firmly determined at all hazards to maintain the war, as they were in 1775.

I wish myself to pursue another course of life. I entered the Army from principle and have continued to this hour from the same motive, but considerations foreign to the dispute induce me to wish to retire to private life. I am but an individual; the little share of influence I can claim, I hope to use in support of the rights of humanity and for the benefit of society. I am not an advocate of sanguinary measures, nor a supporter of sanguinary men. The period has not yet arrived in which the separating line ought to be made. Whatever my political opinions may be, I hope they will never erase the sentiments of personal friendship mutually imbibed in early life.

A personal interview, if you choose, we can have at or near our lines on your obtaining a flag, in which I shall be very happy. In the meantime, accept the tender of every service I am capable of rendering you, and believe me,

Your friend and obed't. servt.,

To Rev. William Walter. SAML. H. PARSONS.

June 3, 1778, General Parsons wrote, as follows, from Fort Arnold, one of the Posts in the Highlands, to his friend, Thomas Mumford, then at Hartford, in attendance on the legislature of which he was a member:—

FORT ARNOLD, *June 3, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—Your favor by your nephew, I duly received. Am happy at all times to have it in my power to render you or your family any services as a just acknowledgement of the private benefits you have afforded me, as well as advantages my soldiers have derived from your benevolence. I am fully of opinion Major Bigelow should purchase the linen mentioned in your letter and have wrote him on the subject. I am unfortunate in not being able to procure moneys for him at present; but have sent him twenty thousand dollars in loan office tickets which I hope will answer as a substitute for money at present. Any sum he wants will be supplied in this way. I need not require your assistance to help him procure moneys if he wants on those certificates, as I know you are disposed to forward the service in every possible method. News

we have so much and so uncertain, I shall not at present report any again. The internal political concerns of Government, though I am at present in another line, I feel myself a little interested in. What little news of this or any other kind you can afford me, will be agreeable.

I am &c.,

To Thomas Mumford. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Fort Arnold, June 22, General Parsons wrote to Governor Clinton:—

SIR.—John Teller, Master of a Flag of Truce to New York, has returned to this Post, and contrary to his duty has brought a number of prisoners from the city. I know nothing of the men or those who have come out, and cannot suffer them to remain here. I have ordered a guard on board the sloop with orders to deliver the men and passengers to your Excellency by whose permission the flag went down.

July 24, Parsons reports to Washington as to the stock captured along the Hudson and near Kingsbridge.

August 3, Parsons received from Colonel Malcom, whom he had left at West Point with his regiment to continue the work upon the defenses, a letter as full of enthusiasm for the place as was Parsons own letter of February, 22d, to Colonel Wadsworth:—

WEST POINT, *August 3, 1778.*

DEAR GENERAL.—Here I am holding committee among spades and shovels. Why was I banished? However, I begin to be reconciled. I must be so, especially as you are not moving towards York; if you do, don't be surprised to see me parade among you. We are driving on downwards; the more we do, the more we find we have to do. Why did you not begin to move the mountain, rather than add to its magnitude. Send me news and newspapers, anything to keep us alive; this is actually t'other end of the world. My compliments to his Grace and my other good friends and acquaintances in your family. I often think with pleasure on the happiness of the past weeks we were together, but it adds to my vexation too.

To General Parsons.

Aaron Burr was the Lieut. Colonel of Malcom's regiment

and should have been able to enliven the tedium of the camp had he then possessed the qualities he developed in after years.

In the latter part of July, Parsons was ordered with his brigade to join Washington's army at White Plains, and it was not until June, 1779, that he resumed the command at West Point. After the camp at White Plains broke up, he went into winter quarters with his brigade at Redding in Connecticut, and in February, 1779, was ordered to take command of the District of New London and construct fortifications for the defense of that place.

CHAPTER XVI

TREATY WITH FRANCE. EVACUATION OF PHILADELPHIA. ARMY AT WHITE PLAINS. ARRIVAL OF D'ESTAING. CAMP AT FREDERICKSBURGH. PARSONS' MILITARY OPINIONS. CAMP AT REDDING.

June, 1778—March, 1779

ON the 6th of February, 1778, the Independence of the United States was recognized by the King of France in a formal treaty which, among other things, provided that neither party should lay down arms until the Independence of the United States should be assured by Great Britain by its acknowledgment in a treaty at the termination of the war. The Congress of the United States ratified the French treaty on the 4th of May, and the Army at Valley Forge and the garrisons in the Highlands celebrated the event with the firing of cannon and shouts of "Long Live the King of France." On the 11th of May, Sir Henry Clinton took command of the British forces in Philadelphia in place of Sir William Howe, who shortly afterwards returned to England. The English Army at this time consisted of about thirty-three thousand men, of which number, nineteen thousand five hundred were in Philadelphia, ten thousand four hundred in New York and the remainder in Rhode Island. The American Army did not exceed fifteen thousand men, of whom eleven thousand eight hundred were at Valley Forge. The British Ministry, hopeless of conquering America by civilized warfare, had given secret instructions to Clinton "to lay waste Virginia, to attack Providence, Boston and all accessible ports between New York and Nova-Scotia, destroying vessels, wharfs, stores and materials for ship-building. At the same time, the Indians, from Detroit all along the frontiers of the West and South to Florida, were to be hounded on to spread dismay and murder. No active operations at the North were expected except the devastation of towns on the

sea and raids of allied savages on the border." Clinton was also ordered to detach five thousand men for the conquest of the French island, St. Lucia, and to send three thousand more to Florida; to evacuate Philadelphia and concentrate the remainder of his army in New York, this last because of the French treaty and the knowledge that a squadron was fitting out to blockade the British fleet in the Delaware River; but it was not until the 18th of June that the evacuation actually took place. Learning of this movement, Washington immediately crossed the Delaware with his whole army, and threw forward detachments to harass and delay the enemy on their march. A general engagement ensued near Monmouth on the 28th—one of the hottest days in the year—which resulted in a drawn battle; but the Americans remained on the field with the intention of renewing the attack the next day, while Clinton withdrew during the night, having "gained no advantage except to reach New York with the wreck of his army." Washington did not follow, but, marching to New Brunswick, moved thence very leisurely to the North River, sparing the troops as much as possible, and crossed at King's Ferry.

On the 24th, Parsons writes to his old friend Thomas Mumford at Groton, Connecticut, announcing the evacuation of Philadelphia and summing up in an ironical way the meager achievements of Great Britain:—

WEST POINT, *June 24, 1778.*

SIR.—By the time this reaches you, the evacuation of Philadelphia will be announced in the Gazette. The enemy took their departure the 18th at sunrising. We took possession the same day, and our army is now in Jersey, where 'tis probable they will by to-day be in close contact with Sir Harry's army. To the immortal honor of Great Britain, she has expended nearly thirty millions sterling, wasted her best blood, transported a greater army than ever before passed the Atlantic; in three campaigns conquered the capitals of five States; fought ten battles, lost one army prisoners, another by death, and at the opening of the fourth campaign may perhaps secure one city strongly fortified sufficient to cover an army of twenty thousand men from immediate destruction; a glory this, in which she will stand unrivalled in fame by any other nation in the annals of future ages. Important events will daily unfold which I will give you an account of as I shall have opportunity. General Gates

assures me he will exchange your son as soon as a flag goes in. The money due you for the use of your vessel I have paid to your son. I shall be happy to hear from you when 'tis convenient.

I am &c.,

To Thomas Mumford. SAM. H. PARSONS.

The entire force of the enemy, except a few troops at Newport, being encamped on "Long, Staten and York islands," and likely to move, if at all, either against the Posts in the Highlands or the Eastern States, Washington selected White Plains as the most eligible position at which to concentrate his army, whether for the purpose of attack or defense. Arriving there about the 20th of July with the main body of his army, he went into camp near Chatterton Hill and the old battle ground of 1776, where he was joined by all the Continental regiments stationed at West Point and along the Hudson under Gates and Putnam. This was the largest force of regular troops brought together in a single encampment during the war, "a veritable Continental Line composed of all the Lines from New Hampshire to North Carolina, except that of New Jersey, which was then stationed in its own State." In all, there were sixty regular regiments of infantry; four battalions of artillery; four regiments of cavalry and several corps of State troops.

The following letter from General Parsons to his friend, Thomas Mumford, is interesting for its description of the camp:—

WHITE PLAINS, *27th July, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—The army is now united under the command of our General. I assure you t'would afford you great satisfaction to see them and compare their situation with that two years ago in this place; then an abject poor set of mortals flying before a victorious insolent enemy, now in turn driving to the Islands for shelter the armies of that haughty Prince who in the hour of victory breathed fire and smoke and would be satisfied with nothing short of unconditional submission; prostrate at the feet of the tyrant and his minister we were to wait for forgiveness and mercy; for what? Not for our crimes, but our virtues. This power has now bended the knee to the injured States and in terms of abject submission supplicate that subjection their arms cannot procure them; vain hopes. Bribery and every insidious art is now tried to effect what

their boasted strength has failed to procure; their measures are as weak as wicked; the power which rules by these insidious arts cannot enslave the brave and free. We daily insult the enemy in their lines. They are strengthening their works and now use the same precautions we were two years ago driven to; they have beat their spears into spades and pick-axes and their swords into bill-hooks. This is truly a marvellous change, and is to be ascribed to that just Being who directs all events to the best good of mankind. Shut up on a few Islands, dispirited and sickly, in danger of famine and unable to meet us in the field, we have nothing to do but wait in safety and with patience for their destruction which is hastening fast to overtake them.

You will hear of the fleet of our allies before I shall, & will be able to give me the intelligence I am at present unable to furnish you. I can only say in general our affairs appear in a most prosperous train. Amidst all our prosperity I feel the unhappiness resulting from parting with my most intimate friends & nearest connections; unexpectedly to me, I believe undesired and unthought of by all, I have lost two regiments with whom I was exceedingly happy, Webb's and Sherburne's, connected with the brigade by ten months happy union, at least on my part. I feel as much distressed as for the safety of a favorite child. I wish them honor and success. I am sure they will not disgrace any officer who leads them into action. My compliments to Mrs. Mumford and family, particularly to my young friend, your son, and accept my best wishes for your welfare. Yr. friend and obedt. servt.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Thomas Mumford.

On the 22d of July, Lafayette was ordered to march to Providence, Rhode Island, with Glover's and Varnum's brigades and Samuel B. Webb's and Sherburne's "additional regiments," which for the last ten months had been attached to Parsons' brigade, and report to Major General Sullivan, who was to command the expedition against the British in Newport. It is the loss of these two regiments from his brigade for which Parsons expresses so much regret in his letter to Mumford.

Washington, writing from Camp White Plains, August 21, 1778, to his friend, Brigadier General Nelson in Virginia, describes the situation in almost the same language as does General Parsons:—

It is not a little pleasing, nor less wonderful to contemplate, that after two years maneuvering, and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes that perhaps ever attended any one contest since the creation, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and that the offending party, at the beginning, is now reduced to the use of the spade and pickaxe for defense. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel who lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations. But it will be time enough for me to turn preacher when my present appointment ceases; and therefore I shall add no more on the doctrine of Providence.

While at this camp the two Connecticut brigades were organized as they subsequently stood until January 1, 1781. The First, commanded by Brigadier General Parsons, was composed of the Third, Fourth, Sixth and Eighth regiments, under Colonels, Wyllys, Durkee, Meigs and Russell. The Second, commanded by Brigadier General Huntington, was composed of the First, Second, Fifth and Seventh regiments under Colonels Starr, Butler, Bradley and Swift.

On the 13th of July, 1778, Count D'Estaing arrived off Sandy Hook with twelve ships of the line and four frigates. This fleet was designed to co-operate with the Americans in any enterprise against the common enemy. No plan had, as yet, been adopted, but only two enterprises seemed to present themselves, an attack on New York or Rhode Island. The Count's first wish was to enter New York Bay and destroy all the British vessels lying in the harbor, but he was soon convinced by the unanimous testimony of experienced pilots and by actual soundings made under his personal supervision, that the channel was too shallow to admit his largest ships, at least without great difficulty and risk. Disappointed in his wish, on the 21st, he sailed for Newport, arriving off Point Judith on the 29th. The reinforcements under Lafayette not having arrived, the attack was necessarily delayed until the tenth of August, but unfortunately on the 9th, Lord Howe's fleet was seen off Point Judith standing towards the harbor. The next morning D'Estaing went out to meet him. A storm of extraordinary violence arose the following night scattering and

seriously damaging both fleets. The French did not appear again until the 20th, when Greene and Lafayette went on board the flag ship and endeavored to persuade D'Estaing to again unite in an attack on the enemy, but without effect. The whole fleet sailed from Rhode Island to Boston harbor to refit. Sullivan, in consequence, on the 28th, withdrew to the north part of the Island. Pursued by the enemy, a severe engagement took place the next day at Quaker Hill, in which the Americans held their ground until night, when they crossed to the main land. Webb's regiment, then in Lafayette's command, was engaged in this battle, and by its steadiness and good conduct reflected great credit upon Parsons' brigade from which it had been detached. The failure of this enterprise was most unfortunate, for, as Washington wrote his brother, John Augustine, on the 23d of September, "if the garrison at that place, consisting of nearly six thousand men, had been captured, as there was, in appearance at least, a hundred to one in favor of it, it would have given the finishing blow to British pretensions of sovereignty over this country. and would, I am persuaded, have hastened the departure of the troops in New York, as fast as their canvas wings could carry them away."

August 11th, at a meeting of the Governor and Council of Connecticut, a letter from General Parsons, dated New Haven August 8th, stating that Washington was desirous to collect whale boats to transport one thousand men, &c., was considered, and the request contained in the letter, granted.

On the 28th, Washington wrote Sullivan:—"I yesterday received information from Long Island that looks like a great and general move among the British army. The real intent I have not been able to learn."

Camp White Plains, August 24, Parsons writes to his wife news just received from his son, William Walter:—"Billy is at Norwalk. He has been over on Long Island and behaved as a good soldier." While there, the boy, then only sixteen, had interviewed Colonel Webb and other prisoners, and brought home to his father valuable information in regard to the movements of Sir Henry Clinton, his troops and his vessels, which the General, on the 29th, reported to Washington.

Writing September 23, to his brother, Washington confides to him his perplexity as to the intentions of the enemy:—

What their present designs are, I know not. They are busily preparing, however, for something. Whether to operate against our Posts in the Highlands and this Army, whether for a remove eastwardly, and by a junction of their land and naval forces, to attempt the destruction of the French fleet at Boston and the repossession of that town, or whether to leave us altogether for the purpose of reinforcing Canada, are matters yet to be determined. . . . There are but two capital objects which the enemy can have in view, except the defeat and dispersion of this Army, and those are, the possession of the fortifications in the Highlands, by which means the communication between the eastern and southern States would be cut off, and the destruction of the French fleet at Boston.

Unaware of the secret instructions to Clinton to send five thousand men to St. Lucia and three thousand to Florida, the knowledge of which would have explained the mystery of the unusual activity in New York, Washington, in September proceeded to break up his camp at White Plains and dispose his troops so as to counteract most effectually what appeared to be the designs of the enemy. On the 11th, General Gates, who was to command at the eastward, marched with one division of the left Wing towards Danbury. On the 16th, the remainder of the army left White Plains pursuant to the following order from the Commander-in-Chief:—

HEADQUARTERS, WHITE PLAINS, *Tuesday, September 15th, 1778.*

Parole: Dunkirk. Countersign: Dresden-Danbury.

After Orders, September 15th, 1778.

1st. The whole Army will march to-morrow morning at seven o'clock. The *generale* will beat at five; the *troop* at six and the *march* at seven precisely.

2d. The baggage will precede the troops the first day. Provision and forage wagons going in the front.

3d. The Park of Artillery will march with the Second Line between Parsons' and Clinton's brigades.

4th. The Commander-in-Chief's baggage with the baggage of all the General Staff and Flying Hospital, are also to march with the

Second Line in the order which will be particularly pointed out by the Quartermaster-General.

5th. The Quartermaster and Commissary-General will divide the stores in their respective departments to the several columns, which will lead the columns of baggage.

6th. Col. Sheldon with all the cavalry on the east side of the North River will join General Scott.

7th. The Quartermaster-General will give the particular order of march to be observed by each division.

8th. The troops are to be furnished with three days bread.

As appears by Washington's letter to the President of Congress, written from Fredericksburgh September 23, stating the position of the Army at that time, the right wing took position in the Highlands, the part under Putnam, composed of three Virginia brigades, encamping at Robinson's, opposite West Point, and the part under DeKalb, composed of the two Maryland brigades, at Fishkill Plains, about ten miles east of the village on the Sharon Road. This reinforcement, which made the force on the Hudson about equal to that of Clinton in New York, was thought to be sufficient to secure the communication across the river, the safety of which was particularly important at this time, almost all our supplies of flour and a great part of our meat being drawn from the west side. The Second Line of the Army, composed of the two Connecticut, one New York and two Pennsylvania brigades, under the command of General Lord Stirling, encamped in the Fredericksburgh Precinct (now included in the present towns of Patterson, Carmel and Kent in Putnam County), not far from the borders of Connecticut. In this Precinct Washington established his Headquarters. The remaining division of the left wing joined Gates at Danbury, where now was encamped under his command the entire left wing of the Army, composed of one New Hampshire, one North Carolina and three Massachusetts brigades.

October 16, upon his arrival at Fredericksburgh, Washington held a Council, at which he submitted to the generals present, among them Parsons and Steuben, a series of questions on which he desired their opinions. The following are the minutes of the Council:—

At a Council of War held at Fredericksburgh, Oct. 16, 1778.

The Commander-in-Chief informs the Council that the enemy's whole force in these States continues in two principal divisions, one at New York and dependencies, consisting of about 13,000; the other at Rhode Island, consisting of 3000; that a considerable detachment from the former, sent three or four weeks since into Bergen County in the Jerseys, has hitherto been employed in a forage; part are said to have lately returned and the remainder, it is given out, intend to cut a quantity of wood before they leave the Jerseys; that their fleet was still in the harbor of New York the 9th instant, and rumored to intend sailing shortly for Boston; that the general current intelligence from New York indicates preparations to be in readiness to leave that Port, and more particularly a design of making a considerable detachment generally supposed for the West Indies, the number mentioned from ten to fifteen regiments, which are reported to have been filled up by the reduction of some other regiments; that an officer of ours, a prisoner with the enemy just exchanged, brings an account of the actual debarkation of a large body of troops on Saturday night and Sunday last, said to be destined southward, of which, however, no confirmation has been received from any quarter.

That our whole force in this quarter is about ——— rank and file fit for duty, including two brigades in the Jerseys and the garrison at West Point, a considerable part of which has completed and will soon complete the term of service for which they are engaged; that General Sullivan has under his command at Providence about ——— Continental and State.

From this state of facts and under these circumstances, the Commander-in-Chief requests the opinion of the Council, whether it will be prudent and advisable to make a detachment of the main army towards Boston and of what force.

He further informs the Council he has been impatiently waiting for the movements of the enemy to ascertain their intentions for the winter, in order to enable him to better judge of a proper disposition of the Army in winter quarters, but the uncertainty in which their designs still continue involved, and the advanced season of the year, will no longer admit of delay in fixing upon a plan for this important purpose. He, therefore, requests the advice of the Council on the following points; whether the army shall be held in a collected state during the winter and where; whether it shall be distributed into cantonments and in what particular manner; what precautions shall be adopted in either case to shelter the troops and procure subsistence and forage.

He observes, that in determining these questions, the considerations principally to be attended to are—the actual strength and situation and the probable designs of the enemy, the security, good government and discipline of the Army, the difficulties of subsistence and accommodation, the protection of the country, the support of our important Posts, the relations proper to be preserved with the French fleet, considering the degree of probability of its remaining where it now is, and of a winter operation against it, and the occasional succor it may desire from the troops under General Sullivan and from the militia of the country.

The following is Parsons' opinion in full, in answer to the queries submitted to the Council, and also to other questions contained in letters to him from Washington, of October 14th and 15th. It was evidently well considered, not only from a military but from a political standpoint, and gives a favorable impression of the abilities of General Parsons, both as soldier and statesman:—

CAMP, *October 17th, 1778.*

SIR.—The march of part of the troops towards Boston being determined, it only remains for me to give my opinion in what manner the Army shall be disposed during the winter, and how they are to be provided with forage and provisions.

The security, good government and discipline of the troops will be best attained and promoted in a compact body, and bread will be easier supplied in a station near the North River than in any other position, and no other position will so effectually secure our important Posts near that River. Forage will be provided with greater ease and at less expense in a dispersed than a compact situation. I imagine the greater part of the meat consumed in the winter will be salted, the grass fed beef will soon be expended, and the stall fed beef will not be furnished in great quantities until near the close of the winter; if this should be the case, the expense of carriage will be less in a dispersed than a united situation.

On the whole I am of the opinion that about six or seven thousand men should be kept in a collected body at or near Fishkill, which, with the assistance of the militia, will be able to defend these passes against any force the enemy can bring against them before the whole army might again be united; that about one thousand be posted in the garrison at West Point, about three thousand at or near the Clove on the west side Hudson's River, and the remainder, about two thousand, not far from Danbury or Ridgefield, or in that proportion

should the army be more or less numerous after the first of January, by which time the term of service of many in the army expires. These Posts will be so far removed from the enemy as to be secure against any sudden attack of the enemy, and will enable them with safety to send off most of their horses and cattle. The guards for preserving the passage by King's Ferry to the Southern from the Eastern States may be furnished from Fishkill; and the intermediate guards necessary, from Danbury and the Clove.

The Post at Danbury may furnish guards on the sea coast to prevent incursions of small parties of the enemy to desolate their towns or pillage their property, and although no protection can be afforded the towns on the sea coast sufficient to prevent their destruction by a large detachment of the enemy, yet a protection from the incursions of small parties will be a great relief to the inhabitants; and a body of troops stationed near the coasts may probably prevent the enemy from making those attempts which otherwise would be made.

But a reason which has great weight in my mind, is the great dissatisfaction which will be given the Country if this measure is not pursued. I cannot omit again expressing to your Excellency my fears that the present temper of the Country, the discontent and increasing uneasiness of the army, the depreciated state of our currency and other causes not necessary to enumerate, afford the enemy a fair opportunity to plunge us into inextricable ruin and destruction. If these fears are justly grounded, great attention ought to be paid to the inclinations and wishes of the inhabitants of these States, as one mode of preventing those consequences which may follow from the present state of the Country.

This disposition of the Army is sufficiently numerous in every part to keep up regular discipline, and in case of an attack may soon be supported; and will serve as a nucleus to which the militia will gather, and with whom they will be able to make an effectual opposition to any detachment the enemy can send.

I am &c.,

SAML. H. PARSONS,
Brigadier General.

To General Washington.

On the 16th, the following order was issued from Headquarters at Fredericksburgh:—

To-morrow being the anniversary of the surrender of General Burgoyne and his troops to the American Army under the command of General Gates, it will be commemorated by the firing of thirteen cannon from the Park of Artillery, at 12 o'clock.

The firing of the salute was followed by a grand parade and festival.

Having received advices that the British fleet left Sandy Hook on the 19th and 20th of October, and apprehensive that its destination was Boston Harbor and D'Estaing's fleet, Washington directed General Gates, then at Danbury, to proceed to Hartford and take command of three brigades which would be immediately sent to him at that place, and to go to Boston in case it should prove that the enemy's fleet had sailed in that direction. Fatigue parties were sent forward to repair the roads through Connecticut, that there might be no delay in the passage of the troops. On the 22d, General McDougall was ordered to march to Hartford with the three brigades composing his Division, and join General Gates. The following is the marching order issued to the Division, which, on the 19th, had been directed "to hold itself in readiness to march at a moments warning:"

HEADQUARTERS, FREDERICKSBURGH, *Thursday, October 22, 1778.*

Parole, Rhode Island. Countersigns, Rupert; Rehobeth.

Nixon's, Huntington's and Parsons' brigade are to march at seven o'clock to-morrow morning from the left, under the command of Major General McDougall. The Quartermaster General will give the route.

On the 25th, the Division reached New Milford in Litchfield County, Connecticut, where it was overtaken by directions to halt there until further orders, news having been received that the fleet which sailed from the Hook contained only the invalids of the Army and a few passengers and supernumerary officers, and that the main fleet and the transports, on board which were the troops, were still in the Harbor; upon which, General McDougall issued the following division order:—

CAMP, NEW MILFORD, *October 26, 1778.*

"His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, has directed the troops to remain here until further orders, and be in readiness to march at the shortest notice as circumstances shall require. While the Division is reposed, two days bread will be on store continually-baked."

In the meantime General Gates was sent to Boston to take command of the Eastern Department. Thus for four months was Washington kept guessing the intentions of Clinton, when, as it turned out, he had never entertained designs against either the French fleet or the Highlands, and that his force was so weakened by the detachment of nine thousand troops for foreign service, as to be incapable of any important operation. His only hostile movements during all this time, aside from foraging expeditions into New Jersey, were General Grey's raid on the towns around Buzzard's Bay, when a large amount of property was destroyed in New Bedford, and Colonel Campbell's expedition into Georgia, resulting in the capture of Savannah.

While McDougall's division was held in camp at "Second Hills, three miles from New Milford," being "in a disagreeable state of suspense, out of the route of the Post and every intelligence which can be relied on, and with no great society, Generals Parsons and Huntington not being with their brigades," General McDougall writes, November 5th, to Governor Clinton, expressing pretty freely his opinion of General Gates:

General Gates I understand has gone to command at Boston. I know he was exceedingly impatient under command, and, from his known temper, I suspect he prefers being the first man of a village to the second in Rome. He has but little to do there; but the service will not suffer by his being at a Post of ease and security. I could hardly believe he was so extremely credulous as I found him to be. He is the most so in his profession of any man I ever knew who had seen so much service. He has the weakest mind to combine circumstances to form a judgement, of any man I ever knew of his plausible and specious appearance. In short, Sir, he is as weak as water. His whole fort lies in a little routine of detail of duty, and a perfect knowledge of the English corrupt Nobility. The Lord of Hosts have mercy on that army whose movements must depend on his combination of military demonstrations of an enemy. God avert so great a Judgement to America as his having the chief command of her armies. It's fortunate for America Gen. Burgoyne was so rash as to put himself in the position he did, and that there was no other route for him to Albany but the one he took, or he would not have been an American prisoner.

This being McDougall's first experience with a Yankee Division on the march, he thinks the Governor would have been as much entertained, as he was, by the sudden and surprising improvement in their conduct, shown by the Connecticut troops upon reaching the Connecticut border. "They had been so wantonly destructive of fences and other property on the march," he writes, "that I determined to end it and issued very explicit and stringent orders for the purpose—orders which the officers in Huntington's brigade in conversation with me, with very grave faces observed, were exceedingly proper and necessary and must be obeyed; for they were now going among their own people who would think the Devil had got into the army if these prudent orders were violated. You may be sure I concurred with them and added, that I would personally have no trouble with the transgressors, but should turn them over to the civil authorities to be dealt with. The consequence has been that not a single panel of fence has been burned on the march or since we encamped. The truth is, they are much in awe of the civil authorities and fear for their reputation at home. Their countrymen would indeed conclude the Devil was in them if they had conducted as they have done in the army and in other places."

While in Middletown, Connecticut, on leave for the purpose of attending to his private business, General Parsons writes to General Washington, as follows:

MIDDLETOWN, *October 29th, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.— . . . I find my affairs will require my continuing in this State most of the ensuing winter. Since I hear nothing from Congress, I imagine my resignation is laid by with other papers. If any troops are quartered within this State, I shall be much obliged by your Excellency ordering my brigade for this purpose. I wish to be with the troops under my command, and, should they be quartered in this State, I could attend to the settlement of my own affairs without neglecting the duties of my office. I propose to be at Camp next week if the troops do not sooner move this way.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

While on duty at Horseneck near the Sound during the

month of November, Parsons writes to General Washington the 16th, 19th and 23d. On the 16th he says:—"I am obliged to continue a few days longer on the sea coast before returning to camp. Small parties of the enemy exceedingly distress the inhabitants in this vicinity. If a brigade could be posted near the coast, it would be of great service. Fifteen hundred to two thousand men would be sufficient." He hopes to be in camp by the end of the week and asks to have his brigade quartered in or near this State. On the 19th he reports information brought by Captains Lockwood and Leavenworth from Long Island, and states that he expects information from spies in New York, which he reports in his letter of the 23d.

In a letter to Congress, dated November 27, 1778, Washington writes:—"I have the pleasure to inform Congress that the whole Army, one brigade and the light corps excepted, is now in motion to the places of the respective cantonments for winter quarters." Its disposition in the several quarters, he states in the same letter will be as follows:—

Nine brigades will be stationed on the west side of Hudson's River, exclusive of the garrison at West Point; one of which, the North Carolina brigade, will be near Smith's Clove for the security of that pass and as a reinforcement to West Point in case of necessity; another, the Jersey brigade, will be at Elizabethtown to cover the lower part of New Jersey; and the other seven, consisting of the Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania troops, will be at Middlebrook. Six brigades will be left on the east side of the River and at West Point; three of which (of the Massachusetts troops) will be stationed for the immediate defense of the Highlands; one at West Point in addition to the garrison already there; and the other two at Fishkill and the Continental Village. The three remaining brigades, composed of the New Hampshire and Connecticut troops and Hazen's regiment, will be posted in the vicinity of Danbury for the protection of the country lying along the Sound, to cover our magazines on the Connecticut River, and to aid the Highlands in case of any serious movement of the enemy that way. General Putnam will command at Danbury, General McDougall in the Highlands and my own quarters will be in the Jerseys in the neighborhood of Middlebrook.

The close of the fourth year of the war found the British

practically prisoners on Rhode and New York Islands, their fleet furnishing them the only means of escape. The Americans, on the other hand, not only held what they had recovered from the enemy, but they had gained in military knowedge and experience and had more than doubled their strength and prestige by their alliance with France.

November 13, General McDougall having obtained leave of absence for a few days, the command of the Division devolved temporarily on General Huntington, General Parsons not having yet returned to camp. On the 19th, pursuant to the following order, the Division broke camp and marched under the command of General McDougall, to Danbury:—

CAMP SECOND HILL, *November 18, 1778.*

The division marches to morrow (Thursday) for Danbury. The *generale* beats at four o'clock and the *troop* at five, when the march will begin. General Nixon's brigade goes by the new bridge through Newtown. Invalids are to be sent forward this day under careful officers. Parsons' brigade leads, marching by the right and advances a sufficient van-guard. Huntington's brigade furnishes a rear-guard under the command of a vigilant officer to pick up all stragglers. The wagons follow the brigade to which they belong. Each brigade will have a field officer or captain to superintend the order of march and correct all abuses on the spot. The Forage Masters, as soon as they have completed their duty on the old ground, will go forward and make provision. Provisions for the troops are to be drawn immediately and dressed for Thursday and Friday at least. All the guards are to carry their own packs. One sentinel to each baggage wagon is sufficient.

The Division remained at Danbury until Sunday, the 22d, when, in obedience to the following order, Parsons' brigade, under the command of Colonel Samuel Wyllys, marched back to Fredericksburgh:—

CAMP NEAR DANBURY, *November 21st, 1778.*

In consequence of orders received from Headquarters, General Parsons' brigade will march to-morrow morning at seven o'clock. No baggage will be carried except tents and cooking utensils; the chests and other heavy baggage will be left under a proper guard at Mr. Starrs, as the brigade is likely to return in a few days. No straw

will be burned on any account. The *generale* will beat at six o'clock, the *troop* at seven, when the march will begin. The commanding officers of regiments will see that no more tents are carried than sufficient to cover the men they march. Those men that are least able to march will be left behind as a baggage guard.

The brigade camped for the night at Southeast Precinct in Putnam County, and on the 23d, reached Fredericksburgh, when the following brigade order was issued:—

The commanding officer of the brigade directs the commanding officers of the regiments and companies, respectively to pay attention to the men that they are comfortable in their tents; that the rolls are called punctually and all the men accounted for. That no injury is done to the inhabitants by burning fences and carrying off hay without the knowledge of the Quartermaster.

The apparent reason for this unexpected recall of Parsons' brigade, was the departure of the two Pennsylvania brigades for Middlebrook, pursuant to the following order, leaving only General James Clinton's brigade of New York troops in camp:—

HEADQUARTERS, *November 24th, 1778.*

Parole, Nassau. Countersign, Natick, Needham.

The Pennsylvania Line and Park of artillery will march to morrow morning at nine o'clock, the stores and baggage of the Flying Hospital and General Staff to move with them.

Washington must have left Fredericksburgh with these troops or very soon after, as the last order from Headquarters was dated November 27 and he arrived at Elizabethtown in New Jersey, December 3.

The brigade seems to have had very little to occupy it during its stay at Fredericksburgh aside from a court-martial held the 28th for the trial of minor offenses. December 1, pursuant to the brigade orders of the previous day, the brigade commenced its return march, "leaving the old General's and Commissary's Guard unrelieved, the new guard to remain on the ground until the troops and baggage have moved off, and then to follow in the rear to pick up the stragglers." Its camp the first night was at Southeast Precinct and the second

at Danbury. On the third it reached its destination, the little town of Redding which had been selected for the winter quarters of the Division. About December 1, General Putnam relieved General McDougall, who thereupon went to Peekskill to take command in the Highlands.

Early in November, General Putnam had fixed upon three sites for the proposed camps, one for each of the two Connecticut brigades and one for Hazen's regiment and Poor's New Hampshire brigade. The site for Parsons' camp was well located on what was known as Redding Ridge and convenient both to wood and running water. The brigade orders of December 4, gave minute directions for laying out the camp:—

> The huts are to be built 14 by 16 between joints with logs 'duftailed' together; the door towards the brook at one end and the chimney at the other; the square of the hut must be six feet high at least before the roof comes on; the gable ends must be contracted until they come to a proper point; the ribs of the roof serving to form the roof proper for shingling. The huts to be built in two rows with eight feet distance between them, agreeable to our present mode of encamping. Col. Wyllys' regiment to occupy 28 rods in front; Col. Meigs' regiment 30; the other two regiments 15 rods each; the Quartermaster of each regiment must be particularly careful to see the ground properly staked out for each hut to be built on. The officer's huts of each regiment must be built in a regular line at about 16 feet distance from the rear line of the soldiers. The Quartermasters of the several regiments of the brigade will run lines and mark trees between the grounds both in front and rear of their respective regiments, so as to secure the wood and timber properly belonging to each. An officer of each regiment must be appointed to superintend the hutting of the regiment to which he belongs. The brigade Quartermaster will make an equal distribution of tools and utensils necessary for hutting. Major Smith will superintend the hutting of the whole brigade and see that the foregoing order is particularly attended to.

General Parsons established his headquarters on Redding Ridge and, about the middle of the month, moved his family there to a house on the main road not far from the Episcopal Church. The location proved so satisfactory that he continued to reside there until December, 1781, when he removed to Mid-

dletown. December 17, by an order from Division Headquarters, the following changes were made in Parsons' staff:—

Quartermaster Belding of the First Connecticut Brigade, is appointed Quartermaster of Division and is to do that duty till further orders.

David Humphreys Esq., late Brigade Major to General Parsons is appointed Aid-de-Camp to Major General Putnam till further orders and is to be regarded and obeyed as such.

Captain Champion is to do the duty of Brigade Major to Brigadier General Parsons till further orders and is to be obeyed accordingly.

Lieut. Judson of the Eighth Connecticut Regiment, is appointed Quartermaster to General Parsons' brigade till further orders.

Humphreys remained with General Putnam until the spring of 1780, when he served for a few weeks on General Greene's staff, and on the 23d of June was appointed Aid-de-Camp to General Washington.

Redding, December 27, 1778, Parsons issued the following order to his brigade:—

The General of the brigade informs the officers and soldiers that he has used every possible method to supply flour or bread to the brigade. Although a sufficiency of every article necessary is at Danbury, the weather has been so extreme that it is impossible for teams to pass to that place. Every measure is taken to supply flour, rum, salt and every necessary to morrow, at which time, if a quantity sufficient comes in, all past allowances shall be made up. The General, therefore, desires for the honor of this corps and their own personal reputation, the soldiery, under the special circumstances caused by the severity of the season, will make themselves contented to that time.

The brigade orders of the 29th, were:—

The General desirous of contributing so far as in his power towards the happiness of his brigade, orders that half a pint of rum or brandy be delivered to each officer and soldier to morrow.

On the 27th, Parsons wrote to General McDougall from Camp Redding as follows:—

In my last I had time to say little more than acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 21st inst. The flour for supplying the troops here is expected from North River, and no liberty has been granted for removing forage from the westward to this Post, but we procure our supplies eastward and southward. I suppose the forage in the country between us and Peekskill, especially near the roads, should not be removed, but remain to supply the travel. I hope I was not understood to fault the vigilance of your guards. I have never had any reason to call that in question. I have heard since mine of the 9th, that the militia of New York are at North Castle; if their numbers are sufficient with a small guard at Bedford to guard the stores and those establishing at Round Hill and Horseneck, they will be pretty good security for that part of the country. I have lately been to Sawpits and the vicinity. I believe our guard may be posted securely where they may send parties of observation to White Plains and on the East River road. . . .

I am concerned how we shall maintain our guards. Unless some new measures are adopted, the whole of the flour must be furnished from York State, and although Mr. Leak lives in the midst of a flour country at Bedford, by some unaccountable neglect he does not supply flour even for the guard at Bedford, but he and others have, in a number of instances, seized the flour going to Horseneck, for the guards there. This must be prevented or our guards cannot be subsisted.

Parsons further says that he believes he has trustworthy information that the enemy's intentions next campaign depend on the result of a sea engagement between the English and French fleets; that, if successful, "they expect large reinforcements, and, unless we rescind our Independence, (which they expect,) will vigorously pursue their operations again." He also mentions that by a letter from New York, "he has the cantonments of the troops on that station," which are given here to show the minuteness and precision of the information obtained from spies in his employ:—

Emmerick's corps on this side the Bridge; three regiments between that and Harlem; one at Harlem; three regiments in and near the city; one on Staten Island; a guard at Powle's Hook; one regiment at Brookland; one at Bedford; one at Newtown; Col. Wurmb's Jagers at Flushing; grenadiers and light infantry, about twelve hundred, at Jamaica; Cathcart's Legion at

Jericho; 16th Dragoons at Hempstead; Queens Rangers at Oyster Bay; a guard of about two hundred men at Lloyd's Neck, making in the whole about eight thousand men.

At this time owing to the scarcity of flour in New England, it became necessary to draw largely from New York to feed the troops. To this the inhabitants of that State objected and constantly interposed obstacles to prevent its removal, which resulted in great distress to the men. In the following letter to Governor Clinton, General Parsons protests against this unpatriotic and unfriendly conduct of the people of his State:—

GREENWICH, *January 2, 1779.*

DEAR SIR.—I have this moment arrived here to give some orders respecting the guards in this quarter, and to my surprise, I find the Bedford Junto still refuses to suffer flour to come on to this Post. Are we to be sacrificed, or is there a fixed design to sacrifice the officers commanding in this division? The troops must be withdrawn unless some measures can be taken to furnish flour here without such constant interruptions as we have experienced in this quarter. I know your Excellency is incapable of being accessory to these purposes, but I believe there were never so many artifices made use of to render it impossible to keep our guards and do our duty. I beg your Excellency's interposition, and that such orders may be given as will prevent this evil. I received your Excellency's answer respecting Scudder. I believe him brave and thought him honest, but must beg your particular direction in this matter.

Yr. obedt, hum'le servt.

To his Excellency,
Governor Clinton, Poughkeepsie.

SAML. H. PARSONS.

The following is from General Parsons to General McDougall:—

HORSENECK, *January 5, 1779.*

DEAR SIR.—I have ordered my guards to guard the road leading from King Street to White Plains and all avenues to the Sound. Some are advanced so far as Purchase Street and Rye. The patrol is ordered to Mamaroneck to morrow. I think we shall be obliged to withdraw our guards from there, however, for want of provisions. Many objections to the passing Continental flour through Bedford are made by the authorities. I am &c.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To General McDougall.

When the troops went into winter quarters, they were in no very happy frame of mind. Badly fed, badly clothed, and, worse than all, unable to assist their impoverished families with the nearly worthless currency in which they were paid, they soon, with leisure to meditate on their wrongs, began to exhibit a mutinous spirit. Parsons was able to keep his own brigade quiet, but the Second, commanded by General Huntington, resolved to march to Hartford and in person demand a redress of grievances of the Legislature then in session. The brigade was already under arms and ready to march (Dec. 30, 1778) when Putnam rode down to their quarters, and, addressing them kindly but firmly, persuaded them to return to their duty.

A week before this, General Parsons, ever solicitous for the health and comfort of his men and jealous for their rights, had written the following letter to General Washington respecting their sore need of proper clothing:—

CAMP REDDING, *December 23d, 1778.*

DEAR SIR.—When I last conversed with your Excellency on the subject of clothing for my brigade, I received your assurances I should have my rateable proportion of the blankets, shirts, and other small clothing for my brigade according to a return then given in, since which time I have received no article of any kind. I am sure the great multiplicity of business in which your Excellency is engaged must have occasioned our misfortune in this matter, for I cannot persuade myself 'tis your Excellency's intention to deny us those supplies which we have the faith of the Continent pledged to deliver, and nothing, I believe, could have induced your Excellency to have given the order for the whole remaining quantity of blankets &c., without permitting my brigade to be served with any part, but your not recollecting the state of those troops. We did receive your Excellency's order to Major Bigelow to furnish coats, wescoats and breeches for the soldiers, and esteemed it a favor, but in this also we have been unfortunate, for so many other orders had been given as to take away so great a part of the cloth that the remainder proved very insufficient for the purpose. I have inclosed a return of the clothing received and wanting. I believe I have eight hundred men who are totally destitute, and many of them never had a blanket since their enlistment. The clothing has not yet arrived at Danbury and cannot proceed till the carting is better than at present, which leaves time to acquaint your Excel-

lency with the effect of this order and to request directions that the five hundred remaining blankets may be detained for the use of my troops, and so many shirts and stockings as your Excellency shall find to be our part of the whole which has been furnished this year for the troops. I have not the least doubt of your Excellency's intentions to do equal justice among the troops; this justice we have not yet had. When other troops have received blankets nearly sufficient for them, we have not yet had one third part. If the blankets now ordered forward cannot be delivered to my troops, I beg your Excellency's directions to Major Bigelow to purchase a further quantity for that particular purpose, that we may at least have some distant prospect of receiving some benefit from the public promises so often made us.

In the same letter he stated that cattle and forage in large quantities are taken to the enemy, and asked for explicit directions as to seizing and destroying the same; and further says, "I have herewith transmitted to your Excellency such intelligence as I have been able to procure from the gentleman I mentioned when last with you, and such accounts as I have received from other persons." It is evident from this that Washington knew the names of the persons from whom Parsons at this time was obtaining information.

In a letter dated January 8, 1779, Washington had complained to Putnam that General Parsons, in the foregoing letter of December 23, and charged injustice and partiality in his manner of supplying the troops. This letter Putnam showed to Parsons, who, thereupon, wrote as follows to General Washington:—

CAMP REDDING, *February 3, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I am this day favored by General Putnam with a sight of your Excellency's letter to him of the 8th of January. I am sorry to find my intentions have been so much mistaken as to impress your Excellency with an opinion so very distant from my thoughts. I have reviewed my letter of the 23d of December, and cannot satisfy myself that anything like injustice or partiality in your Excellency's attention to the troops of the different States is in the most distant manner suggested. I am certain I never entertained a sentiment of the kind, and am fully persuaded that, however unfortunate the troops of my brigade have been in the article of clothing, they never had an idea their misfortune arose from

any undue preference given to the troops of other States. I had your Excellency's order for 400 blankets for my brigade, which we received; another order for the same number was given, one hundred of which were for my brigade and 300 for General Huntington's. These are all we have received from the Public and I believe were the full share we ought to have received at that time, very few having then arrived; and if 500 is the proportion my brigade ought to receive the whole, I am still contented. That they have not received the quantity of any one article of clothing promised by Congress is a fact, but I believe they are no more discontented than any other troops under their circumstances would have been. Their discontent has never shown itself in riots or mutinies; they have complained and were almost naked, but have never shown an inclination to leave the service or commit any disorders in consequence. This has not been the case with other brigades. When they have complained, mine were quiet; when they were guilty of riots and disorders, mine were silent and orderly in Camp. Under the circumstances I feel myself particularly unfortunate in being thought the author of disorders and tumults which have arisen in brigades with which I had no connection, and of promoting uneasiness in my own. I am conscious I do not justly deserve the imputation; and no officer who has the honor to serve under your Excellency's command, has more exerted himself on every occasion to prevent disturbances of every kind in Camp; but it has often been my misfortune to have been suspected of transactions I never thought of. I hope I may without offense assure your Excellency we have not had the necessary clothing the Continent promised us. We do not—we never did—impute this to any partiality in your Excellency, but the order given on Major Bigelow for coats, wescoats and breeches for my brigade and for General Huntington's, was at a time when the cloths had been taken from that store by the troops under General Gates' command, though then unknown to your Excellency and to me, and a sufficiency did not remain to complete their outside clothing. I know I then thought it a favor to receive the order, and it would have been so if the cloths had remained there, but no order was ever given upon Major Bigelow for anything but coats, wescoats and breeches.

The First Regiment from Connecticut has been completed with outside clothing; the Fifth and Seventh have had cloth nearly sufficient for the purpose. This is not the case with my brigade, though I believe they now have cloth nearly sufficient for coats and a great proportion of their wescoats; of this they do not complain; of breeches or overalls they are very deficient; in shirts and stock-

ings they have very few. . . . Whatever opinions may be entertained of my conduct or intentions, I hope never justly to deserve your Excellency's displeasure.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The gross inequality in the distribution of clothing which Parsons so justly complains of, and of which Washington quite as bitterly complains in his own letters, was due, as Washington states, to the lack of an efficient head in the clothier's department, every deputy of which was apparently a law unto himself. But the cause back of all, and the cause of most of the difficulties under which the country and the Army labored, was the incompetency of Congress whose business it was to properly organize the several departments. At first, Congress was filled with the ablest men the country afforded, but of late this class had seemed to prefer employment in their own States, and had left the management of Continental affairs to inferior men. The letters of the public men of the period express great alarm at the situation. Washington, in a letter to his friend, Benjamin Harrison of Virginia, exclaims: "Where is Mason, Wythe, Jefferson, Nicholas, Pendleton, Nelson, and why do not you, as New York has done in the case of Mr. Jay, send an extra member or two for at least a certain limited time till the great business of the Nation is put on a respectable and stable establishment." Gouverneur Morris, denouncing Congress for its incompetency, declared that it had depreciated more rapidly than the currency. Alexander Hamilton, in a letter to Governor Clinton, says:—"There is a matter which often obtrudes itself on my mind and which requires the attention of every person of sense and influence among us; I mean the degeneracy of representation in the great Council of America. Many members of it are no doubt men in every respect fit for the trust, but this cannot be said of it as a body. Folly, caprice, a want of foresight, comprehension, and dignity characterize the general tenor of their actions. Their conduct with respect to the Army, especially, is feeble, indecisive, improvident, insomuch that we are reduced to a more terrible situation than you can conceive. They have not made that provision for officers which was requisite to interest

them in the service They have disgusted the Army by whimsical favoritism in their promotions and by an absurd prodigality of rank to foreigners. America once had a representation that would do honor to any age or nation. The present falling off is very alarming and dangerous. What is the cause and how is it to be remedied?"

The following general orders were issued by General Putnam from his Headquarters at Redding:—

January 12, 1779. Complaints have been made that the inhabitants have suffered great injury by the loss of sheep, poultry and many other articles since the troops have been stationed at this place. The General cannot suppress his indignation that any of the soldiers under his command should be guilty of such wanton, scandalous conduct. Every precaution, he flatters himself, will be taken by the officers to put a stop to such licentious practices and to punish severely the authors of them.

January 26, 1779. The General has received such information as induces him to believe it highly probable the enemy will soon make an excursion into the country after cattle and other provisions; he desires, therefore, that everything should be in readiness to make a sudden exertion to check their progress and frustrate their designs.

January, 27, 1779. Should the enemy advance into the country, the signal for an alarm will be the discharging three pieces of artillery at a minutes distance, from the Second Connecticut Brigade, which will be answered in the same manner from General Poor's brigade &c. The Commissary will follow the brigade with the provisions and a sufficient quantity of spirits, that there may not be a moments delay, as everything will probably depend on the rapidity of the movement.

The British having counterfeited certain issues of the Continental currency, Congress was compelled to withdraw them from circulation. The following resolution of Congress in respect thereto was promulgated from Headquarters at Redding, January 31, 1779:—

Whereas it may happen that part of the moneys paid for the months of September, October & November to the officers and soldiers of the United States for their pay and subsistence, may be of emission of the 20th of May, 1777 and 11th of April, 1778,

Resolved, That in such case, the Paymaster General and Pay-

masters at respective departments, be directed to exchange moneys to the end that said officers and soldiers be not deprived of the same. The officers and soldiers of the army who are possessed of any bill of credit of Continental money of the emission above mentioned, are desired to carry them to the Paymaster General's office in order to have them exchanged for bills of other emissions which have not yet been counterfeited.

HEADQUARTERS, *February 3, 1779.*

Major General Putnam has received information from his Excellency, Governor Trumbull, that an attack is soon expected from the enemy on the town of New London and the shipping in the harbor, and at his earnest request, orders a detachment to garrison that place till the militia can be ordered in, and as the ships are not fully manned, it is necessary that part of the detachment should be seamen to act on board in case the attempt should be made. The detachment to parade to morrow morning at 10 o'clock, near the orderly office with four days provisions (hard bread and pork) and thirty rounds per man. The Quartermaster will provide four days rum, which will be carried forward with the detachment. The Division Quartermaster will order two teams to attend the detachment to transport the camp kettles and officers light baggage.

Courts-Martial were held at Headquarters by order of General Putnam on the 4th and 6th of February, the minutes of which may be of interest as showing the manner of conducting these courts and executing their sentences during the Revolution:—

HEADQUARTERS, *February 4th, 1779.*—At a General Court Martial of which Lt. Col. Reed is President, were tried the following persons:

Edward Jones for going to and serving the enemy as a guide and coming out as a spy. Found guilty of each and every charge exhibited against him and sentenced by the Court to suffer death according to the laws and usage of nations.

Benjamin Nobles of Capt. Lacey's Company, 5th Battalion, for deserting and persuading other soldiers to desert to the enemy; found guilty of deserting to the enemy and sentenced to receive one hundred lashes on his bare back.

Asa Thayer, a soldier in the 8th Connecticut Battalion, for breaking open the Quartermaster's stores in Danbury and feloniously taking from them a number of shoes; found guilty of theft and sen-

tenced to receive one hundred lashes on his bare back well laid on.

The General approves of the sentences of the Court against Benjamin Nobles and Asa Thayer and orders them to be put in execution at the head of their respective Battalions to-morrow morning at *troop* beating. The sentence of the General Court Martial upon Edward Jones is ordered to be put in execution on Friday, the 12th inst., between the hours of ten and twelve o'clock, by hanging him by the neck till he is dead, dead, dead.

HEADQUARTERS, *February 6th, 1779.*—At a General Court Martial of which Lt. Col. Reed is President, were tried the following persons, viz:

John Smith, soldier in the First Connecticut Battalion, for deserting and attempting to go to the enemy; found guilty, and further persisting in saying he will go to the enemy if ever he has opportunity, sentenced to be shot to death.

Sergeant Ebenezer Boyington of the Sixth Connecticut Battalion, for deserting; found guilty and sentenced to receive one hundred lashes on his bare back and to be reduced to the ranks and to pay to the sergeant that was sent after him the expense incurred by the same.

Simon Mallery of the Sixth Connecticut, for stealing a horse and selling the same; found guilty and sentenced to receive sixty lashes on his naked back.

Isaac More, soldier in Capt. Walker's company of artillery, for stealing $300; found guilty and sentenced to receive one hundred lashes on his naked back and to refund the $300.

The General approves the above sentences and orders that upon John Smith to be put into execution on Tuesday, the 16th. inst. between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon; and the sentences of the Court against Boyington, Mallery and More to be put into execution this evening in presence of the respective corps to which they belong.

On the 11th, the execution of Jones was postponed to the 16th, the day fixed for the execution of Smith. On Sunday, the 14th, a guard was ordered "to parade to conduct the two criminals to Redding Meeting House, where there will be a sermon preached. The General desires that the troops may appear clean and neat at the execution on Tuesday." On the 15th, it was ordered that "the brigade parade to-morrow at nine o'clock, well dressed and equipped, to attend the execu-

tion of the prisoners under sentence of death." The execution took place on Gallows Hill, and the circumstances attending it, according to the account in the Connecticut Historical Collections, were revolting in the extreme.

The following brigade order, relating to the payment of the troops, was issued by General Parsons, February 9:—

The Honorable, the General Assembly of the State, has, on the application of the officers of the Connecticut Line, in behalf of themselves and the soldiers under their command, been pleased to grant the sum of forty-five thousand pounds lawful money, to be paid out of the Treasury to the officers and soldiers serving in the infantry and artillery raised in Connecticut, by the first of April next, and have ordered a Committee to make an equal distribution of the same, that those who have not been entitled to supplies at former prices may have a proper consideration.

This generous grant of the Assembly, made at a time when our fellow citizens are so greatly embarrassed, and when they are obliged to raise such heavy taxes to carry on the war, and to reduce the quantity of circulating money ought to give us the fullest confidence in the rectitude and justice of their intentions toward us. A greater sum is not in their power to pay at this time consistent with their engagements.

The General further informs the brigade that he has received the fullest assurances from his Excellency, the Governor, and the Council and the House of Representatives, that full and complete justice shall be done to the officers and soldiers of this State, and that measures for raising a sufficient sum for that purpose shall be taken as soon as circumstances of Government will possibly admit, to discharge this debt, which they consider as a debt of honor and in strict justice due to the Army.

The General flatters himself that the Army will, by their faithful services, show themselves worthy of the attention of their countrymen, and convince the world that this instance of the care of the Assembly, produces in them the most grateful resentments and cordial reliance on their future justice towards them.

Early in February, General Parsons was at Horseneck looking after the Coast Guard at that Post, the duties of which, on account of the proximity of the enemy, were more difficult and exacting than perhaps at any other Post on the Sound. On the 10th, a reinforcement of one hundred men was sent down

from camp, and on the 17th, the whole guard was relieved by a fresh detachment two hundred strong. From this time on, the routine of the camp remained undisturbed, except that on the 26th, upon an alarm, which proved false, the two Connecticut Brigades were ordered to march towards Wilton, and the next month, on a report that numbers of the enemy's ships were going up the Hudson, to hold themselves in readiness to march on the shortest notice.

The following is the last brigade order issued by General Parsons before he was ordered to New London:—

Brigade Orders, *February 21, 1779.*—Complaints having been made by some of the inhabitants that their fences have been thrown down by soldiers passing through their fields during the winter, and as the season is so far advanced as renders it necessary for the fields to be inclosed, especially those sowed with grain, it is earnestly recommended to all officers and soldiers who have occasion to cross any of the inhabitants enclosures, to be particularly careful not to injure the fences, but, on the contrary, if they should see any fence out of order by which means the grain might be endangered, they will be so neighborly as to rectify it, it being of the last importance that the fruits of the earth be preserved, both for the subsisting of the Army and the inhabitants.

CHAPTER XVII

PARSONS IN COMMAND AT NEW LONDON. CORRESPONDENCE WITH WASHINGTON AND GREENE. THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE WARFARE. RETURNS TO REDDING. COMMANDS THE DIVISION. THE MARCH TO THE HIGHLANDS.

February—June, 1779

THE movements of the enemy on Long Island indicating an intention to attack New London and destroy the shipping in the harbor, a detachment of Continental troops had been sent there early in February to garrison the town until the militia could be called in. Appearances becoming more threatening, General Parsons was ordered to proceed to New London, where he arrived about the 22d, and take command of the troops there and organize the defense of the place. The only Works guarding the approach from the sea, were Fort Griswold on the high ground at Groton opposite New London, and Fort Trumbull on the west side of the harbor, close to the water and below the town. These Forts and their surroundings, General Parsons made a careful examination of, and in the following letter to Governor Trumbull, submitted his observations as to their condition and tenableness in case of attack and as to the additional defensive Works necessary for the proper protection of the Post:—

NEW LONDON, *February 27, 1779.*

SIR.—My command here having led me to a consideration of the measures necessary for the defense of this Post, I hope it will not be esteemed arrogant in me or a departure from the line of my duty to submit the following facts and observations to the consideration of your Excellency and Council by whom only measures can be ordered which are finally adjudged necessary for the security of this Town and Post. Fort Griswold, at Groton, is situated upon the height of the hill and is commanded by no ground within cannon shot, and, in conjunction with the battery near the water and one about southeast from the Fort (which are commanded by the Fort),

clears all the hollow grounds by which the enemy can approach near that Fort; and, with the addition of a demi-bastion at the north-east corner, will be able to make a good resistance against any attempt to storm this Work, if a proper supply of ammunition and provisions are lodged in the Fort to furnish the garrison. Little more I think is necessary to complete the Works on that side and I do not at present see a necessity of any new ones.

Fort Trumbull is commanded by a range of hills in the rear and on the right, which so overlook the Fort and within so small a distance as to render it impossible to be held in its present state for one hour after the enemy have possessed the heights in the rear with artillery, besides which difficulty the ledges and detached highlands behind this Fort afford a safe approach within almost pistol shot of the Fort, where large bodies of men may be safely lodged from any fire which can be made from the Fort; nor do I find it possible to secure this Work from attempts which may be made in either way without a cost which can scarcely be estimated. The walls of this Fort must be raised at least sixteen feet higher than at present to secure the men on the platforms from the enemy's fire from the heights in the rear, and were the Fort of a proper construction, it must be raised much higher. Two or three sides of this Fort are enfiladed by no other part of the Work, and the enemy might rest perfectly secure under the very walls of the Fort. One or two bastions or demi-bastions must be made to remove this difficulty, and I think the work must now be laid in lime or it will not be secure from a fire from the hill, should it be raised. The walls at present afford no security whatever to any men posted there, and it can now serve no other purpose than a water-battery against the ships.

Upon examination, there does not appear any ground so advantageous as to give so manifest an advantage as to warrant a small body of men to attack a very superior force in their advance from the light house to town. On these considerations, Sir, I am convinced of the necessity of an inclosed Work on the hill near the house now occupied by J. Miller, Esq. This place so commands Fort Trumbull that no enemy can possibly hold that Fort whilst we are in possession of the hill. This principal Work with two small circular batteries under the command of the Work, will, I think, effectually prevent the advance of the enemy through any route they might otherwise take to possess this commanding height; and these Works can be completed with much less expense than Fort Trumbull can be made defensible, and answer better purposes than that can ever be made to answer. This Fort is well calculated

for a water battery and may be well maintained as such, if the other Works are made.

The objection generally made, and with great propriety, against multiplying Works and dividing our force, does not lie with considerable weight in this case, because the batteries will in that case require no more men than will work the guns, and they are effectually covered by the Fort which overlooks them all within point blank shot. I have inclosed a very imperfect draft which, however, may in some measure assist your Excellency in considering the matter.

I find fifty-eight pieces of cannon in the several Forts and batteries, including those on travelling carriages, from three to eighteen pounders; these upon a medium, will require four pounds of powder at least for charging them. The number of rounds, Sir, which you will expect to be used, must be at the place where 'tis wanted or it can be of no service. This, at fifty rounds for each cannon, will be near six tons of powder; and I presume you will not be willing to yield the Forts without discharging nearly as many shots as this computation. Musket cartridges for one thousand men in both Forts (when the Work is built at New London), for five or six days ought to be lodged in the Forts and also provisions, because of the impossibility of supplying them when the Forts are invested. I suppose, on an average, one pound of powder will make about eighteen or twenty cartridges. Allow only sixty rounds for one thousand men, (and this, I think, must be considered a moderate computation for men in an invested Fort), this consumes one and a half tons more; that, besides a reserve to supply the deficiencies of a militia who come in with little or no ammunition, is necessary for the artillery and musketry within the Forts. If these ideas should in any measure be adopted, will it not be necessary at this time when the season will admit beginning the Fort, to order in five or six hundred militia, and begin the work without delay.

I have often found on alarms, the militia come in small parties and under no officers present and on that account are not able to form in any regular battalion, as they conceive an opinion that they are to serve with their own officers only. Cannot this be remedied in part by assigning particular places of rendezvous on alarms for the regiments or parts of regiments, and they be immediately formed under such officers as happen to be present, whether of their own companies or others. The arranging and forming these troops after their arrival, in the face of the enemy, consumes much time and is attended with great danger. Proper beacons erected and

signals agreed on to alarm the country on the approach of the enemy, will greatly expedite the march of the militia.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Groton, March 1, 1779, General Parsons again writes to Governor Trumbull:—

SIR.—By a letter received this afternoon, I find Sir William Erskine is again reinforced and that his present strength is twenty-five hundred men; that a company of carpenters is sent from New York to Southampton and by every intelligence I am able to procure, there remains very little doubt of the enemy's intention to visit the main; and by several accounts I imagine it probable they intend destroying this Post. As our continuance here is very uncertain, I cannot but think it necessary to furnish a number of the militia as soon as possible that the necessary Works may be completed and some defense prepared. I could wish some gentlemen of the Council may be sent to determine on the necessary Works to be erected, that no time be lost in this matter.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

While at New London, General Parsons planned an expedition to destroy the enemy's shipping up the Sound, in which he is aided by his old friend, Thomas Mumford of Groton, who, four years before, assisted him in raising men and money for the capture of Ticonderoga. Mr. Mumford was an agent of the Secret Committee of Congress and rendered valuable service to the Country thoughout the war. On the 28th, Parsons replies to a letter from Major Huntington, complaining of the delay in fitting out the privateer, "Confederacy," which he is anxious should be ready immediately. He states that he "has desired Mr. Mumford to supply the necessaries to fit the ship immediately. He is kind enough to give an order for rum, coffee, cordage, &c., and if cash is wanting, it will be supplied immediately upon application; if wine is wanting, call on Colonel Rogers or Captain Mumford, with Mr. Mumford's desire for what you want."

New London, March 12, 1779, General Parsons again writes Governor Trumbull:—

SIR.—The misfortune which has happened in the loss of the "Defense," seems again to throw embarrassments upon the proposed expedition. The "Confederacy" will be fitted by about Monday. That ship and the "Oliver Cromwell" are now our only dependence. To add to our disappointments, part of the detachment is ordered to march immediately, and one from General Poor's brigade to be ready to march, which probably will take place in a few days. The letter from General Putnam will inform your Excellency of the cause of this movement. Under the circumstances, I am much at a loss whether to pursue the intended expedition and, if the "Confederacy" should be ready, go up the Sound and attempt the ships, if found practicable, or entirely give over the enterprise. If your Excellency will decide the matter, perhaps it may be of some benefit to the trade of the Sound for the ships to go up as far as Fairfield or Norwalk and attempt or not the ships at Huntington as they find their force to be greater of less.

The recall of the troops from this place makes it necessary for me again to propose to your Excellency's consideration the immediate draft of militia for the defense of this Post. I am satisfied by a variety of intelligence from Long Island, that there is at least a probability of an attack here at a period not far distant, and should the militia not come in before my troops march, 'tis not unlikely the enemy's visit may be hastened. Your answer by the bearer will direct my conduct.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

New London, March 18, 1779, General Parsons writes advising General Putnam of the failure of the proposed expedition up the Sound:—

DEAR GENERAL.—I received yours of yesterday. A fatality which is scarcely to be paralleled attends all our projects and blasts the fairest prospects. After forming measures to be executed with a force in the Sound which would have rendered our success almost certain, the Navy Board has countermanded one half the naval force, and, as though Heaven and Earth conspired to render our measures abortive, the "Defence" was lost on Goshen Reef two days ago and Mr. Shaw refuses to let his ships on the proposed expedition. This leaves us to rest the event on the "Confederacy," when ready, and the "Oliver Cromwell," which will render the success at least doubtful. Under these circumstances I must advise against any land attempt, as the safety of the party attacking will

depend on the success of our ships; at most, I think, no more should be sent than will at all events be safe in their whale-boats. I have written the Governor, who has the direction of the naval force and expect a return to night, and also to hear again from the Navy Board. If I find that the ships left will not answer, I shall order Poor's brigade to march back without loss of time. Hazen's people will march to-morrow. I shall detain one express till morning.

Yours &c

To General Putnam. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The same day at 6 P. M., General Parsons advised Governor Trumbull of his orders to march:—

SIR.—I think it is my duty to inform your Excellency that I have this moment received orders to march my detachment to Redding as soon as possible. As I shall doubtless march within two or three days, and no troops are in to relieve us, the Post must be left to the mercy of the enemy unless some measures are speedily taken for its defense.

Yr. Obed's. Servt.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

March 21, 1779, the following orders were given Colonel Hazen's regiment to march from the camp at Redding to Springfield, Mass:—

Col. Hazen's regiment will march to Springfield in three divisions by the shortest route. The first division will march on Wednesday next and the other two will follow on Thursday and Friday, weather permitting; in such case the detained portions will join the regiment in time. Col. Hazen will take with him one cannon and a proportionate number of artillerymen.

On the 28th, Parsons wrote General Washington from New London, that a fleet of the enemy had been sighted; and again on the 29th, "I was last week on my return from this place to camp, but on receiving intelligence of the enemy's fleet moving towards this place, have returned. A fleet is now off Sag Harbor with troops on board."

The scouting vessels coming in reported that twenty sail had passed Hell Gate; that twenty-six sail were at anchor in Gardiner's Bay; that a sixty-four and a fifty gun ship were coming around Montauk Point into the Sound and that Sir Henry Clin-

ton had left New York and was mustering a large force of troops at Southampton. The news created something of a panic. The alarm bells were rung, the militia called in and many of the inhabitants removed their families and effects; but day after day passed and no attack was made. It was then ascertained that the transports had gone to Newport; that the fleet in Gardiner's Bay was bound for New York; that all was quiet at Southampton and that but few troops were on the north side of the Island. It is not a little singular, as events proved, that the unusual activity of the British which had caused the alarm, was not directed against New London, but was occasioned by a rumor confidently believed by the enemy, that General Parsons was at New London with a force of four thousand men making hasty but secret preparations for a descent on Long Island, in consequence of which Clinton had hastened from New York with a flying column to meet the expected invasion. Both sides were trying to dodge each other in the dark.

In the spring of 1778, General Parsons was so much depressed by his failing health, annoyed by the failure to send the promised supplies to his suffering troops, and burdened with anxiety lest the depreciation in the currency and rise in prices should leave his young family without sufficient means of support, that he determined to resign from the army. March 11, 1779, he writes to John Jay, President of Congress, tendering his resignation. Congress not acting upon it, he again writes Mr. Jay on the 8th of April, repeating his request for a discharge and giving his reasons at length. He is willing, however, to continue in service if he can be provided for in the Marine Department, which will give him a better opportunity to attend to his family concerns and will be less injurious to his health. The reasons for his resignation he states as follows:—

I have served in the army raised for the defense of our country since the 21st of April, 1775, in which I hoped to continue till peace should reward our labors, and, although I claim no merit from distinguished military abilities, yet I feel a satisfaction in the consciousness of having invariably and with honest intentions pursued the duties of the several offices with which I have been honored,

and discharged them with fidelity according to my abilities. But, Sir, I have a numerous family, and at the commencement of the war I turned my little all into moneys the better to enable me to continue in the service of my country and to do justice to my family. The unexpected rise of every necessary of life has defeated my hopes and already exhausted too great a share of my small estate. The unavoidable fatigues of camp have greatly impaired my constitution, and I find myself at an age of life in which I hoped for ease and domestic happiness in the enjoyment of my family in retirement from the cares and busy scenes of this world, with my health impaired, my constitution wrecked, my estate greatly impaired, so that a diligent attention to business is necessary to save a numerous family of young children in my old age, which I now find fast hastening upon me. For these reasons I am compelled to request a discharge from the offices with which Congress have honored me. I beg you to assure that Honorable Body my application does not arise from any discontent with the measures of Congress or my superior officers, nor from any alteration in my sentiments respecting the justice of our cause or the prospects of a favorable issue. I am fully convinced of the one and most ardently wish and believe the other, but to sacrifice my all at my age in life, to leave my children to the mercy of an unrelenting world, are considerations of too great importance to be lightly considered by me, and from a full flow of health and spirits I feel myself so enfeebled as to leave me no hopes of being able to endure the fatigues of another campaign. Could I continue to serve my country in any way in which my health might be preserved and the interests of my family in any degree secured, I shall be happy to devote the little remainder of my days to promote her good and secure the rights of an independent people. . . . I have not a wish that my particular case may induce Congress from motives of compassion to adopt measures not founded on principles which tend to promote the best good of the United States. I had better be passed over in silence that my country may be saved, than be preserved on principles which will destroy her even at a late hour.

Notwithstanding the promises made him, Parsons' brigade had not yet received the necessary clothing. This neglect he attributed to the misrepresentations of parties unfriendly to himself, which so influenced the General-in-Chief that he failed to give due credit to his reports as to the wants of his troops.

This apparent lack of confidence was naturally very disturbing to a high spirited man like Parsons. Not willing that his men should suffer on his account, and believing that another might obtain for them what he had been unable to secure, he found in this an additional reason for resigning from the army. In the two following letters he states to his friend, General Greene, the difficulties under which he labors and asks him what course he would advise in the situation in which he is placed.

NEW LONDON, *March 12, 1779.*

MY DEAR GENERAL.—I believe you my friend and fully unfold my situation that you may see my embarrassments and direct me in my measures. No man ever entertained a higher opinion of the rectitude of the General's intentions than I have and still do, but unfortunately I have fallen under his displeasure. I have enclosed a copy of the letters I have wrote the General, by which you will see my situation and the causes of it. I have enclosed my resignation in a letter to the President. The grounds which induce me to this measure are that I am persuaded I do not possess the confidence of the General necessary to do justice to those under my command or secure my own personal honor. . . . If you find my opinion justly founded and that I no longer share the General's friendship, I beg you to forward my letter to Congress, for I cannot serve with justice to my command or honor to myself whilst I am under the frowns of the worthiest character which has graced the page of history. I am &c.,

To Maj. General Greene. SAML. H. PARSONS.

General Greene in his reply to Parsons' letter, having apparently satisfied him that he was in error in supposing the intentions and feelings of the General-in-Chief were unfavorable or unfriendly to him, General Parsons, who had now returned to Redding, again writes, April 11, 1779, explaining more fully the difficulties he had met with:—

"I have," he says, "not a wish nor a most distant suspicion, that his Excellency should, or has, intentionally given any undue preference to any troops under his command, but am persuaded his intentions are upright and disinterested. I fully and heartily acquit him from all blame, . . . but tho' I acquit him, I am still as unfortunate as if my misfortunes arose from a conduct of his Excellency which had worse motives for its basis. I am not believed

when I assert facts; the officers and soldiers under my command suffer exceedingly from this opinion of me, and every injury they suffer from this opinion is in part to be attributed to me. I continue in service under these circumstances. . . . The Connecticut troops complained, they were naked, they had neither blankets nor shirts, nor breeches; the weather was severe, exceedingly so; they had no covering and little clothing. In the Second Brigade it proceeded greater lengths than in mine; they mutined, mine were quieted. I have left no measures untried to calm their minds and relieve their wants. I wrote to his Excellency on the subject. (Dec. 23, 1779.) He gave me no answer, but in a letter to General Putnam . . . intimates it is fully in my power to prevent disturbances which arise from want of clothing were I inclined to do it. . . . This I endured with as much patience as I could, and though I knew him mistaken, I could not entertain the idea that he would intentionally make distinctions among the troops; but soon after there came an order to clothe the Second Regiment, and, as I am informed, a similar one for the whole of the Second Brigade. (Huntington's.) . . . This confirmed me in a belief his Excellency had by misrepresentations been induced to believe that there was no credit due to the facts I had so often stated to him respecting my troops, and that I was rather inclined to make difficulties than heal them, for I do not now believe, he ever intended in the most distant manner to do us an injustice, and yet we have and do suffer in a great degree beyond any other troops under his command. Under these circumstances 'tis impossible for me to apply for anything my brigade are in want of. We have and do suffer and I cannot ask for redress. If these facts warrant my conclusion, I am justified in thinking it injurious to my officers and soldiers and dishonorary to myself to continue in command. I will never on this ground forsake the cause of my country nor will this and much more induce an opinion in me dishonorable to his upright intentions in every part of his conduct. Another man may procure that justice to my troops which I most certainly should have had if any credit had been given to my representations."

In closing he adds these sympathetic words for General Putnam:—

"I believe General Putnam has been abused. I have the same sentiments of the man which I believe you entertain, and however well it might be for him to retire from his public station at this

time, it must affect in the most sensible manner a feeling mind to see the measures taken to remove from office, one who has been a faithful servant and has grown old in honest endeavors to do his country good; and the means used to induce him to relinquish his place are such as renders it impossible for him to retire with honor, and who can wish disgrace to attend him in his last days. I confess I think when the public have no longer occasion for the exertion of any of their servants, it requires no great skill to dismiss them in a manner which would not wound the feelings of a good man.

I am &c.,

To Maj. General Greene. SAML. H. PARSONS."

On the 24th, General Greene himself, disgusted with the dilatoriness of Congress and its apparent disinclination to second his views and efforts to put the Quartermaster's Department on a business basis, wrote Washington asking leave to resign.

April 6, 1779, General Parsons writes from the camp at Redding, to which he had returned from New London, advising Governor Trumbull of the reports from Long Island:—

SIR.—By several gentlemen who left Long Island last Saturday, I am informed that General Clinton has returned to New York. A small reinforcement has arrived there. The "Renown" is at Huntington, where I suppose she is to be stationed. They also inform that the strength on the east end of the Island is about 2300 men; that there appears no preparations for leaving that Post, but the moving baggage down the Island (which is still continued), indicates the contrary; that from every fact and information they have been able to procure, they have not the least doubt of their having been a design to attack New London or to have made descents on some part of the coast of this State, but the loss of so great a part of their fleet and intelligence of the country being alarmed and the guards reinforced, have suspended their operations for the present; that they still continue building their flat-boats at or near Southampton. . . . I think it my duty to submit this information to your Excellency's consideration that just measures may be pursued to preserve the coast from ravage and destruction, as may be thought necessary under present appearances. I suppose it will not be consistent with the orders of his Excellency, General Washington, to send any further detachments to New London, and those at New Haven I shall within a few days order to their former stations. If guards are necessary to be kept on the coast the ensuing

summer, I apprehend Government will give the necessary orders to procure them, as there cannot be the least probability of any of the Continental troops being spared for that purpose.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Camp Redding, April 8, 1779, General Parsons advises Washington of intelligence just received by him from Long Island:—

SIR.—I received a letter yesterday of which the following is an extract: "This moment Lieut. Tiffany returned from Long Island, who informs me that a body of Hessians are marching from the westward, but were not so far up the Island as Huntington; that officer's baggage every day is transporting towards the eastward; that the militia of the two western counties are to assemble this week at Hempstead and that a provision fleet has lately arrived; that the Tory refugees and others, are forming an expedition against Norwalk which will be put in execution within ten days."

All accounts from Long Island agree that baggage and provisions are passing to the eastward of the Island, that the building of flat-boats there is continued and in general that there are no appearances of the enemy quitting that Post. The number of foreign troops marching from the westward I have not heard, but 'tis said the numbers are very considerable and that General Knyphausen commands them.

Whatever orders I may receive on this or any other occasion I shall put in immediate execution. In case of a descent on the coast of this State at a remote distance from this Camp, I shall not consider myself at liberty to march the troops from this Camp without your Excellency's particular directions, which I shall be happy to receive if you are of opinion they should be employed that way.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

General Parsons at this time was temporarily in command of the Connecticut Division, Putnam being absent in the eastern part of the State. On the 12th he wrote to General McDougall, then at West Point, cautioning him against an application to be made to him for the release of one, Cornelius Reed of Saybrook, as "he is a person reputed unfriendly to the liberties of the country, and that Major Hart, whose honor

cannot be doubted, has given me notice that a number of men whose names are affixed to a certificate of Reed's being friendly, are themselves professed enemies to the independence of the country." On the 16th, Parsons reports to Washington intelligence received by him as to the movements of the enemy on Long Island, and says that many of the officers of this Division are applying for discharges and that he is at a loss whether he has the power to grant a discharge to any officer and asks his direction about the matter. On Saturday, the 17th, Parsons issued the following order from Headquarters at Redding:—

The Rev. Dr. Evans will perform Divine Service at the Meeting House in Redding to-morrow. Service is to begin at 2 o'clock, P. M. The General desires the officers and soldiers to give their attendance as generally as possible. The First Brigade is to parade at one o'clock on the Brigade Parade, and march from thence to the Meeting House.

On the 22d of April, General Parsons issued the following brigade order from Headquarters at Redding:

In consequence of orders received from his Excellency, General Washington, this brigade is ordered and directed immediately to set about putting themselves in perfect readiness to march in a short time. The officers are directed to disencumber themselves of all heavy baggage, as they will be allowed only to carry such as is indispensably necessary. The officers of every department will pay the strictest attention to these orders and exert their utmost endeavors to have everything in the greatest readiness that there may be no delay if marching orders should suddenly be given. Exact returns are to be immediately made of the arms and accouterments wanting in the brigade, that orders may be given for a supply. . . . It is now a season of the year in which the troops may with conveniency be attended upon. The troops, therefore, in camp and not on duty, will for the future exercise from five to seven o'clock in the morning and from four to six o'clock in the afternoon daily. The adjutants of the several regiments will have their men on the brigade parade punctually at the time. The Brigade Inspector will then take charge of them and pursue the established principles of exercise for the Army, and direct the necessary maneuvers. As there is but a small number of men in Camp at present, the Brigade Major will detail officers for the exercise, not less than eleven to one regiment, for exercise when to be had. As

there may be some new recruits or awkward men in the regiments, such are to be enrolled by themselves and put under the instruction of some active sergeant, if under twelve in number; if over, under some subaltern officer.

On the 23d of April, Parsons writes General Washington acknowledging his letters of the 12th, 17th and 19th instant, and says that in consequence of his direction to put his Division in readiness to march by May 10, he has ordered in the detachments at New London and other points remote from camp, and hopes nothing will prevent his troops being ready by the time named. He advises him that the enemy continues part of the time at the east end of Long Island, but seems to be preparing to march towards New York, and then goes on to say:—

I have reasons which have great weight to induce me to decline any command in the Army in the ensuing campaign, but the situation of the troops is such that I am apprehensive ill effects will follow my resignation at this particular time. I shall continue in my command until the season is so far advanced that my example can have no influence to induce my officers to decline a service which too many of them already wish to be freed from, as I am determined my country shall never justly accuse me of injuring her rights or pursuing measures tending to her destruction. I hope, therefore, if I should at a more advanced season of the campaign seek a dismission, I shall not on that account be esteemed more criminal than by pursuing my intentions at an earlier period.

On the 24th, General Parsons wrote General Gold Selleck Silliman, commanding the Fairfield County Brigade—the Fourth Brigade of militia—notifying him of his intention to call in all the Coast Guards:—

Dear Sir.—I think it my duty to inform you that I have received such orders as will oblige me to call in all the guards I have established on the coast by about the first of May; in the meantime you will be able to pursue such measures for the security of Horseneck and the coast as you think necessary. I have added the names of the prisoners of war in my custody, as I expect we shall soon be called from this place. I cannot long detain them.

I am &c.,

To Brigadier General Silliman. Saml. H. Parsons.

Redding, April 25, 1779, General Parsons writes General Washington as follows:—

Dear General.—Your Excellency's letter of the 23d instant with the intelligence from General Maxwell came to hand this afternoon. I have received information that about the 22d instant, a large number of empty wagons came up to Fort Washington; that the enemy, for about a fortnight past, have prohibited all passing over King's Bridge, and observe the greatest secresy in their transactions at the Post. The accounts we have of the removal of cannon to and the throwing up of Works on Long Island and at the Narrows, are facts more likely to be ascertained from Jersey than here. The inclosed letters will show their state in respect to forage and some other matters. If the enemy are not coming out in force up North or East River, (which a few days will determine), and if they are fortifying at the Narrows, perhaps the wagons may be designed to remove stores from their outposts to contract their lines and render their defense more perfect with few men, especially if, as I am informed from Long Island, the baggage of the Rhode Island troops is sent from New York to that place; this does not look like their joining the troops in New York. In consequence of the orders of the 17th, I ordered the artillery and baggage horses, (which were sent a distance from Camp) to be in by the tenth of May. By your directions to be ready to march on or before that time, I shall send for them to be brought immediately to Camp, and shall also hasten the march of the troops from the commands at a considerable distance from this place. It will also be necessary to comply with your orders, to call in all the Coast Guard, which I shall do this week. I have given orders to the Quartermaster to remove all stores from Danbury to Fishkill, which cannot be left without a guard.

I have no returns of General Poor's brigade, but am sure the invalids, baggage guard, artificers, &c., left here could not exceed fifty; their baggage could not march till their horses arrived, which were at the distance of one hundred and twenty miles. I imagine your Excellency did not recollect that Colonel Hazen's regiment, which was, I suppose, a third of that brigade, had gone another way, and that the furloughed men on re-enlisting and otherways, will nearly account for the brigade; but I have ordered every man to march immediately. I believe there are not more than fifteen here.

I shall strictly comply with your Excellency's orders communicated in your last letter, and hope the movements of the Army

which depend on the readiness of this division to march, will not be disconcerted by any delay on our part.

The returns of arms and accouterments necessary to enable us to take the field have been made and are now again inclosed, which, according to your Excellency's directions, we are to expect from Springfield in consequence of an order you will forward for the purpose.

I herewith transmit your Excellency the report of the Court Martial on the trial of Lt. Col. Holdridge. As we are soon to take the field, I would request your Excellency's early attention to the case that, if the report is satisfactory, he may again take his command in the regiment.

The other report in the case of Gray, I can only say that two sons of the family have died in our service, and there appears some reason to suppose he was coming in on your Excellency's proclamation of pardon. I suppose if he is pardoned, the payment of the horse &c. may be secured.

If I continue in my command this campaign, I have Colonel Webb's request that his regiment may again be annexed to my brigade, if it can consist with the public good. I shall esteem it a particular favor to have that regiment annexed to my brigade, but cannot wish the public interest should give place to my attachment to particular regiments or corps.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The same day General Parsons wrote to General McDougall as to the detachment in Harrison's Purchase:—

CAMP READING, *April 25, 1779.*

SIR.—I have ordered all of Poor's brigade remaining here to join you immediately. I believe there are not twenty in this Camp.

His Excellency's orders make it necessary to call in my out guards sooner than I intended when I wrote to you yesterday. The orders I now have are to be ready to march by or before the 10th of May, and to hold one brigade in readiness to march immediately on news of the enemy's embarking. This cannot be complied with if the command in Harrison's Purchase is continued; I shall, therefore, order them to join the division this week, unless you suppose they can be continued there and the spirit of the order be complied with. . . . I am &c.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To General McDougall.

Detachments from Parsons' Division were doing duty as coast guards all along the Sound from New London to Greenwich. In compliance with Washington's orders, Parsons had already issued marching orders to Lt. Col. Johnson at New London and to Colonel Wyllys at New Haven, and was now calling in his less remote outposts. On the 26th, he wrote to Colonel Swift:—

DEAR SIR.—The orders I yesterday received from his Excellency cannot be complied with if the detachment under your command continues any longer on their present station, but removing immediately may put the inhabitants into a state of too great hazard before they can be in any way prepared to oppose small parties of the enemy. You will, therefore, on receipt of this, march with that part of the detachment belonging to the Second Brigade to this Post, and remove the remaining part of the detachment to Horseneck or such other place as, on consultation with Colonel Grosvenor, shall be thought best to give such protection to the inhabitants as will consist with a reasonable safety to themselves. I wish you to inform Colonel Mead and also the officer commanding the detachment from General McDougall's division of your orders, and that the remainder of the detachment will be called in as soon as Sunday next, that they may take such measures as their prudence shall direct in consequence of these orders.

I am &c.,

To Colonel Swift. SAML. H. PARSONS.

May 2d, General Parsons wrote to Colonel Grosvenor that

General McDougall had ordered Greaton's regiment to the lines to take the place of my troops. On their arrival, you will immediately repair to Camp with the guards under your command. You will also order the guards at Greenwich and at Stamford to leave those Posts and join their regiment; at the same time, if that regiment does not arrive before Tuesday next, you are not to continue longer on that Post. You will take the most effectual care that no stragglers are left on the road and that all soldiers which fall within your knowledge, join the Army.

General Parsons writing to General McDougall from his Headquarters at Redding on the 30th of April, says:—

My orders from his Excellency do not point out the place to which this division is to march, but that it be held in the most perfect readiness to march by or before the 10th of May; and that I

cause the brigades under my command to march immediately to the support of the Posts in the Highlands if I shall receive information of the enemy's embarking troops, or shall be called on by General McDougall in case the knowledge of this circumstance comes first to him. The First Brigade having as a brigade been on duty since both have been in Division, I have ordered the Second Brigade to hold itself in readiness to march on the shortest notice. You see by these orders, the march of either of the brigades to the North River is conditional, and, in case the event mentioned does not take place, I am left without the means of conjecturing our route the 10th of May. . . . The tenor of the information I receive induces me to believe the enemy design the embarkation soon to take place for South Carolina, and that the system in New York is defensive only.

General Parsons was correct in his forecast of the plans and intentions of the enemy. Their mysterious movements and the active preparations in New York, were as it turned out, all made with reference to an expedition against South Carolina, which Sir Henry Clinton was to command in person and which was to sail in a few days, but which was delayed for various reasons and did not get to sea until the latter part of December.

The following order, dated April 28, was addressed by General Washington to the Commanding Officer at Redding:—

By intelligence received from different quarters, there is great reason to suspect the enemy has some important movement in contemplation. In this aspect of things, it becomes the part of prudence to provide as effectually as we can for the security of those points at which we are most vunerable. I am, therefore, to desire you will, without delay, detach General Parsons' brigade to reinforce General McDougall, and to continue with him 'till further orders. They must take their baggage and artillery with them.

To this General Parsons replied:—

REDDING, *May 2, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—Your letter of the 28th, directed to the Commanding Officer here, came safe to me about four o'clock this morning. According to your Excellency's former orders of the 23d, I have given orders to General Huntington's brigade whose tour of duty it is, (mine having performed the last), to hold itself in readiness to march on the shortest notice, and, on receiving intelligence

of the embarkation of some regiment of the enemy, I had ordered them to march to Peekskill to reinforce General McDougall. On receipt of your last, I was much at a loss whether to countermand the march of this brigade and order mine to Peekskill, but considering it will necessarily take up more time before mine can march, all the guards being supplied from my brigade, and General Huntington's having been collected for marching some days, and no new object appearing in which the troops are to be employed, and fearing the Posts in the Highlands, being of great importance and which may require the most speedy arrival of the troops for their support, I thought I could not better comply with the spirit of your Excellency's last order than by continuing the order I had given to the Second Brigade.

But lest I should contravene your Excellency's intentions in marching this brigade, I have ordered mine to hold itself in readiness to march on the shortest notice, and shall this day call in all my outguards that nothing shall on our part be the occasion of any delay in executing your Excellency's commands.

I must remind your Excellency we are not supplied with tents and camp utensils, nor have we any order for arms and acouterments, in which we are deficient. One of our field pieces is split, which I have ordered to Springfield, when I hope we shall be supplied with another. Our horses are sent for but not now arrived, but I hope they will be in very soon. The portmanteaus with which the officers were to be furnished, have not come, nor can I find any are provided here, so that it will be difficult for them to contract their baggage to so small a compass as was expected.

The enemy continues fortifying Laurel Hill east of Fort Washington, and 'tis said when this is completed, they design to evacuate the Posts this side Kingsbridge; this has the appearance of a defensive system in New York. . . .

To General Washington.

I am &c.,
SAML. H. PARSONS.

The following is the order to the Commanding Officer of the Second Brigade referred to above:—

May 1st, 1779.

SIR.—On receipt of this you are directed without delay to march the brigade under your command to Peekskill, where you will receive the orders of General McDougall.

I am &c.,
SAML. H. PARSONS,
B. G. Comm. Div.

May 11, 1779, General Parsons writes to Washington:—

DEAR GENERAL.—My horses and tents having arrived last night (arms, accouterments and some camp utensils excepted) we are ready to take the field; my guards are all called in and we shall be happy to receive your Excellency's orders to march to any place you think proper. I have delivered your Excellency's letters and orders to General Putnam and shall be happy to receive orders to leave this camp.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

General Putnam having returned to camp, writes May 7, 1779, to Washington:—

DEAR SIR.—I am now taking the earliest opportunity to acquaint your Excellency with my arrival in camp to resume command of my division.

From the letters which passed in my absence and which I have seen since my return, I find there was reason to apprehend the enemy would have been in motion before this time, and that upon these appearances, it was judged necessary for all the troops which were under my command to march for the defense of the Posts on the North River, except the First Connecticut Brigade, which is now held in readiness for that purpose. . . . Although I do not in the least doubt the necessity and propriety of these measures, or wish to be informed of the secrets of the ensuing campaign, yet it is exceedingly natural for me to have some little curiosity about my future destination; whether I am to command those troops which have been with me the winter past or in some new department, or whether I am to remain to guard the huts at this place. For after General McDougall is reinforced with the whole of my division (which will augment his to a very respectable command) nothing is said concerning the part which I am to act. . . .

I am unhappy to inform your Excellency that, upon the removal of our detachments from the sea-coast, the enemy have exhibited some specimens of enterprise so usual to them. A few nights since, a small party from a whale-boat landed at Fairfield, surprised and carried off Brigadier General Silliman and his son, Major Silliman. Last night another party landed at Middlesex, near Norwalk, in quest of one Captain Selleck, who happened to be absent; but a Mr. Webb, late a lieutenant in the trainband, two of the inhabitants and the ingenious Dr. Bushnell, fell into their hands. As

the latter, who was there in prosecution of his unremitting endeavors to destroy the enemy's shipping, is personally known to very few people, he may not be discovered by his real name or character and may be considered of less consequence than he actually is. [Bushnell was the inventor of the torpedo used to blow up the Asia.] I am &c.,

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

To General Washington.

In writing, the 16th, to General McDougall, Parsons says:— "The General in his answer to my letters approves of my sending Huntington's brigade to Peekskill, and directs that mine remain at this Post until I receive his further orders and that General Huntington's brigade continue at Peekskill."

President Timothy Dwight, Chaplain of Parsons' brigade by appointment of Congress, October 6, 1777, writes from Northampton, April 23, 1779, to General Parsons:—

DEAR SIR.—Yours of April 10th arrived safely. It gave me pleasure to hear of your welfare and pain on other accounts, which you will naturally guess, although you may not be able to guess so well as Governor Tryon.

I find I shall not be able to join the Army in due season and so, with reluctance, desire you to appoint a successor to me. I am amazed at the attitude of people on both sides of the water. Our country here sinks inconceivably, while taxes rise. Without a gift of prophecy, I will venture to foretell that the movement which forces small farmers to sell their real estate for the purpose of paying taxes, will produce a revolution.

That God may grant a speedy cessation of hostilities is the most fervent wish of your sincere friend and most humble servant,

TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

To General Parsons.

Camp Redding, April 29, General Parsons writes to Colonel Lamb, calling him to account for circulating false reports concerning him:—

SIR.—I am informed that you have taken the liberty to report that I have been guilty of taking from the inhabitants below the lines cattle and other property and appropriating the avails to my own use; and that I have employed soldiers in privateers in which

I am interested to the injury of the public service, and that I have, or now do, carry on a commerce with the enemies of these States. These are in substance the articles of which I have heard you accuse me.

As I cannot persuade myself that any gentleman, especially a person of your good sense, will assert facts so much to the injury of another, and so totally destitute of all color of truth as all those representations are, I think it my duty to acquaint you of the reports, not so much on my own account as yours, for if you have reported these things I know you have injured yourself more than any man can injure me, because there is not the least foundation in truth to support the facts. Neither cattle nor horses nor any other property have been taken by my guards from the inhabitants below the lines since we have been in this camp. I never owned any part of a privateer in my life. I don't recollect to have bought of or sold to any person below the lines or on Long Island or any other place within the enemy's possessions since the controversy first commenced. Nor have I ever received a farthing of any plunder taken under any circumstances.

It is cruel and the height of vileness to traduce any man in this manner, especially one who has invariably followed the fortunes of his country from the first commencement of the contest, and representations of this kind where you are reported to be the authority are highly injurious to you. I am sure you will not deny any reports of which you are really the author, and, therefore, both on your own and my account, have a right to expect an answer by which I may be made certain (for I shall believe you) whether you have reported these things or not.

Charges of this character were made throughout the war against the most prominent people (among others against Governors Trumbull and Clinton) without the least foundation in fact, and usually by persons who were themselves engaged in these transactions and who circulated such reports to divert suspicion from themselves. How Colonel Lamb justified himself does not appear, as his answer, if any were made, has been lost.

April 30, 1779, General Parsons writes to Governor Trumbull respecting several questions which had arisen as to the proper construction of a late Act of the Assembly making provision for the troops of the State:—

SIR.—I have received and communicated to the troops the Act of Assembly of the 7th, making provision for the troops of this State, and hope that general satisfaction will arise from it which the justice and tender concern for the troops manifested in the Act ought to produce. Nothing has or shall be omitted on my part to render the just expectations of the Assembly effectual. As that Body ever has, so I am convinced it will still be desirous of removing every doubt which may arise in construing the Act in which so great a part of the subjects of the State are interested, and rendering it satisfactory to the command. I shall, therefore, freely point out the difficulties which have been suggested and request your Excellency to lay the matter before the Assembly for its consideration. By some, both officers and soldiers, it is supposed the Act makes no provision for doing justice to any who do not serve the term of three years or during the war; that those who die with sickness, fall in battle or are disabled in service or for sufficient reasons obtain an honorable discharge, are not entitled to satisfaction during the time they do serve. I confess I do not see the Act fairly capable of such construction, because the term of three years or during the war mentioned in the Act, appears to me only descriptive of the persons entitled to receive the promised justice, and the expiration of the time of their service, as affixing the period in which that justice shall be done them, and the time of their service expires as effectually on their death or discharge as on the expiration of three years or at the close of the war; and this construction of the Act I have assured the troops is the true meaning and intention of Government.

Another difficulty suggested is, that till the period of payment, no adjustment is to be made, and the longer the time is protracted, the greater difficulties remain in ascertaining the justice due to the Army or the individuals in it; and the party who has to pay has the sole weight of deciding the sums due. Another objection made is the uncertainty whether those of the regimental staff, such as surgeons, &c., are provided for, and some brigade officers, such as Major of brigades, chaplains, &c. These are all serving in the Connecticut Line of Infantry, but are not officers of the Line in the Infantry. As I am sure the Assembly of Connecticut will be desirous of putting their intentions into the most clear and explicit terms beyond the power of construction, and to adopt such measures as will give the most perfect satisfaction, I hope not to give offense when I request, at the desire of the officers, that the Assembly would at their next session, pass an explanatory resolve by which the doubts before mentioned shall be removed, and by which it will

appear that those who die or are discharged before the expiration of the term for which they engaged is ended, and those staff officers who are not of the Line, but serving in the Line, may be explicitly entitled to the liberal grants made by the Assembly, and that a committee be appointed to ascertain the sums due the Army for the years 1777 and 1778 and so at the close of every year; this committee, they apprehend, ought to have one of its members from the Army.

As it will be the interest, so I make no doubt the State will cheerfully furnish moneys to the officers and soldiers from time to time as their necessities may require. The sums voted to be paid this spring and next fall, will be a very essential relief to them, and I must entreat your Excellency's attention to this subject, that the sums necessary may be supplied. They are indeed distressed for want. 'Tis now four months since any wages have been paid, and there is no money among the troops; they are greatly discontented and 'tis with difficulty they are quieted. I believe this sum, if now paid, would be a seasonable relief of their real distresses and would give great content. I cannot but assign the want of pay, or supplies of money in some way, as one cause of the great desertions in our Line. I believe we have lost near two hundred this winter by desertion. The numbers and names I will make out and return to your Excellency, that some measures may be taken to return them to their duty. I am sorry to have reason to say there appears no disposition in the country to aid us in our endeavors to regain our soldiers, but, in some instances, they conceal them and in others refuse them from us.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

May 6, Parsons wrote to Governor Clinton, respecting a a prisoner he sends him, named Willets:—

REDDING, *May 6, 1779.*

SIR.—I have apprehended one, Willets, and send him to your care. My reasons for taking him are that for several months past he has practiced passing along the coast of this State and always makes his quarters among the most disaffected part of the inhabitants; is charged with communicating intelligence to the enemy on Long Island and is suspected to be aiding the plan of passing counterfeit money. [The British at this time were endeavoring to injure our credit by circulating counterfeits of our currency. This was done to such an extent that Congress withdrew an entire issue.]

The jealousies are fortified by his being in no apparent business and spending months in those towns at a distance from his family and friends without any visible cause. The day I took him up, he said he was going to Long Island and that he wanted no public license to go; that he had often passed and repassed to and from the Island and would again do it without liberty. I find in his papers sundry memorandums for goods to be purchased and some letters prepared by him to be sent to the Island, filled with infernal lies calculated to work upon the hopes and fears of the persons to whom directed, and in the end to cheat them out of their estates. His father and uncle are two of these persons, which shows the man wholly destitute of every principle of honor and virtue. He is notorious for having no regard for the truth, and Mr. Lloyd, Capt. Grennell and others from Long Island give him a character of the most infamous sort. Under these circumstances, I thought it wholly improper he should remain on the coast of the Sound, and, as he is a subject of the State of New York, I have sent him to Poughkeepsie that the authorities of that State should take such measures with him as they judge necessary. The money and papers found with him are also transmitted to your care.

I am &c.,

To Governor Clinton. SAML. H. PARSONS.

May 17, 1779, Parsons writes to General Washington in reference to the discharge of Lieut. Jackson and Ensign Hotchkiss, and adds, "If there should be any western or northern campaign, my officers would much prefer being employed in active service to any other disposition of my brigade, if the general good may as well be promoted. For my own part, I should prefer any part in an active campaign to any stationary post."

May 22 he writes to his friend, Lovell, in Congress, enquiring whether any brigadier of later appointment than August 9, 1776, (the date of Parsons' commission) has been promoted. "I am informed General Moultrie is lately promoted. You must be sensible of the feelings of a military officer on such an event, and, although I am willing to devote my life to the service of my country, I shall never be persuaded 'tis my duty to continue that service under such circumstances as will reflect personal dishonor upon me, and must join my fellow citizens in despising myself if I submitted to take any command in the

army under these circumstances." The favoritism of Congress was a fruitful cause of jealousies and heart-burnings among officers of the army, which a better system and a less capricious method of appointments would have avoided to the benefit of the service.

The people of Connecticut living near the Sound had for some time been in the habit of fitting out private expeditions for the purpose of plundering the inhabitants of Long Island who lived within the enemy's lines. This practice General Parsons regarded, not only as unlawful, but impolitic and disgraceful, and as justifying every act of barbarity or cruelty which the British had been guilty of, and which Congress and every honest member of society had indignantly denounced. "But, as there was a claim that the practice would be supported by law," writes Parsons to John Jay, President of Congress, "and very frequent instances would probably occur in which we by our military instructions might be called to interpose, I therefore expressly directed Colonel Gray to seize the goods mentioned in the libel when they came within his guard for the sole purpose of having a decision of the Courts of Law upon the legality of this practice of plundering the inhabitants of Long Island, that we might not be guilty of trespassing on the rights of the people by exercise of military power to suppress this conduct in case it was adjudged legal." The goods seized were libelled by the claimant, William Scudder, and the Court, upon the hearing, very much to Parsons' surprise, having held such private warfare lawful, he reports the case to General Washington and asks for further directions:—

REDDING, *May 15, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The cause between William Scudder and Lt. Colonel Gray respecting the goods plundered upon Long Island has issued in favor of Scudder. Your Excellency will readily believe the perplexing situation the officers commanding on the coast on the advanced Posts are placed by the decree. The single point litigated and decided was, whether merchandise the property of private persons within that territory possessed by the enemy was by law liable to be plundered by any of the subjects of the United States, and on a long and full hearing the Court has justified the practice; the consequence must be that whoever attempts to prevent this practice is a trespasser and liable to an action at law. I know

my officers have honestly and faithfully endeavored to carry your Excellency's orders on that head into execution. I am convinced that the laws of nations as well as the policy which ought to be adopted in this country, whose extensive coast affords so many opportunities to retaliate, forbids the practice, nor can I convince myself that any person or body of men have a greater right to determine the mode or extent of warring than they have to declare war or make peace, and have, therefore, always supposed every species of reprisal was unlawful but those which were particularly authorized by Congress. But the Courts of Law determine otherwise, and, by the consequences of the decree in this case, subject all the inhabitants on Long Island and other places possessed by the enemy to be indiscriminately plundered. The officers, therefore, will be at a loss whether your Excellency would still continue your order to prevent these practices. I am &c.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To General Washington

Believing the decree of the Court to be contrary to law and good policy, General Parsons on the 2d of May transmitted a copy of the proceedings in the case to President Jay and wished to know what in the judgment of Congress was to be done in such cases of private warfare. On the 9th and 20th he again writes Mr. Jay, urging that Congress direct an appeal to be taken, and offering, in case of an adverse decision, to himself pay the costs and save Colonel Gray harmless. He argues against the practice of indiscriminate plunder, not only because it is infamous, but because it is contrary to military orders. "I have always thought," he says, "that the Supreme Council of every nation ought to have the right of making war and peace, . . . and that no man in a state of society can so far resume his natural rights as to determine either the mode or extent of his making war against his neighbor. . . . If forfeitures are incurred in any case, they are made to society and are not to be appropriated to the use of individuals. . . . No civilized nation ever avowed the practice of plundering the inhabitants of those subjects of a nation they were contending with, who remained in their own business and were not found in arms. . . . If no further proceedings are had in the case, I shall suppose Congress is of the opinion the practice is laudable and honorary, and that no military order

to prevent it is to be obeyed, and that every subject of these States who is not restrained by his own private sentiments is at liberty to commit such depredations on the property of the inhabitants within the territory possessed by the enemy as he pleases, and as the trade of plundering is now in a flourishing condition, we shall be at liberty to share the benefits of it with our fellow citizens." Parsons' position on this question, although in the highest degree honorable to himself and fully in accord with the ideas and practices of modern civilized warfare was not calculated to make him friends among the piratical crews that sailed the Sound. Right or wrong, it is certain that these expeditions were not generally looked upon with disfavor. Indeed, the coast people had much to plead in justification. They were themselves constantly subject to raids from the Long Island shore, and it was but human to retaliate. They evidently did not regard themselves as making war, but rather as engaged in recovering what belonged to them. The possibility of injuring innocent people did not deter them, for they well knew that Lloyd's Neck, Huntington's Bay and the whole country between there and New York was a veritable Tory nest, and that strike where they would there was small chance that any patriot would suffer. What the Courts upheld and the general sentiment of the community sustained could not have appeared very criminal in their eyes.

General Putnam having been assigned to the command of the Right Wing, then stationed on the west side of the Hudson near Smiths Clove, issued to his Division the following parting order:—

HEADQUARTERS, REDDING, *May 27, 1779.*

Major General Putnam being about to take command of one of the Wings of the Grand Army, before he leaves the troops who have served under him the winter past, thinks it his duty to signify to them his entire approbation of their regular and soldier-like conduct, and wishes them, (wherever they may happen to be out,) a successful and glorious campaign.

General Parsons, by virtue of seniority, now succeeded to the command of the Connecticut Division, and, except when temporarily absent from camp, continued to command it until his retirement from the Army in 1782.

CHAPTER XVIII

CLINTON'S EXPEDITION UP THE HUDSON. TRYON'S RAID ON NEW HAVEN, FAIRFIELD AND NORWALK. WAYNE RETAKES STONY POINT. SULLIVAN'S EXPEDITION AGAINST THE SIX NATIONS. PARSONS SUCCEEDS PUTNAM IN THE COMMAND OF THE CONNECTICUT DIVISION.

May—December, 1779

On the 28th of April, 1779, General Washington had written General Putnam from his Headquarters at Middlebrook, in New Jersey, that he had great reason to suspect that the enemy had some important movement in contemplation, and desired him without delay to detach General Parsons' brigade to reinforce General McDougall. On the 24th of May he further wrote:—

By recent intelligence through different channels I have the best reason to believe that General Clinton has drawn his whole force to a point at New York and its vicinity; that he has collected, and some accounts add, removed to Kingsbridge, a number of flat-bottomed boats with muffled oars, and that every appearance indicates an expedition at hand. There are but two important objects he can have in view, to wit, this army and the Posts in the Highlands. Should either be attempted, therefore, or a movement made which has a tendency to either, you will cause General Parsons' brigade to march without a moments loss of time for the Highlands and put them under the orders of General McDougall.

The next day the brigade was in readiness to march. The following orders indicate its route to the Highlands.

REDDING, *May 24th, 1779.*

General Parsons orders the brigade to be ready to march to-morrow at six o'Clock A. M., complete for action.

RIDGEFIELD, *May 30th, 1779.*

General Parsons orders that Colonel Wyllys furnish a sergeant, corporal and twelve privates to be posted as a guard this night one-

quarter of a mile in front of where his regiment is quartered on the road leading to Bedford. That Colonel Meigs furnish a guard of the same number to be stationed the same distance on the road leading to Norwalk. The reveille to be beat to-morrow morning at the dawn of day, the troops to parade at four o'clock half a mile below the meeting house on the road leading to Bedford, for which place they will march immediately after, in the same order as this day.

BEDFORD, *May 31, 1779.*

The troops of General Parsons' brigade to have two days rations per man from Captain Townsend, to refresh themselves and be ready to march in two hours, to parade near the meeting house.

FISHKILL, *June 2, 1779.*

General Parsons orders that Com'sr. Sturm deliver one gill of rum per man and two days provisions to the troops of his brigade this day, the Quartermaster to make return of the same.

To the revolutionary soldier rum seems to have been a great necessity. In a letter to Robert Morris written about this time, Washington thus laments its scarcity:—"No magazines of rum have been formed. We have been in a manner destitute of that necessary article, and what we are now likely to draw from the several States will be from hand to mouth."

The enemy having landed at Teller's Point on the Hudson, McDougall deemed it prudent to retire into the Highlands and take post at Budd's, opposite West Point, in order to keep open his communications with the Point and secure the pass to Fishkill in his rear. Here he was joined, June 2d, by General Parsons with his brigade, which went into camp on the east side of the river on the same ground it had occupied ten months before when it left the Highlands to join Washington's Army at White Plains. With this reinforcement, McDougall had three Continental brigades and a large body of militia. The enemy was known to be in force at this time down the river and an early attack was expected. The troops on the east side were ordered to push forward the work on the North, Middle and South redoubts. Patterson not having returned from his furlough, McDougall appointed General Parsons, who was well acquainted with the Post, to command at West Point.

Accordingly, on the evening of the 3d instant, he assumed command at Fort Clinton. The garrison consisted of Learned's, Patterson's and the Carolina brigade, about seventeen hundred strong.

The following letter was written by Parsons to General Washington, in answer to a request for information as to the state of the garrison:—

WEST POINT, *June 5, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—In answer to your questions by Captain Chrystie of the Pennsylvania regiment, I have given him information of the state of this garrison, which will be explained by the proper key. The garrison are in high spirits and are very desirous to receive the enemy's attack. I cannot promise that the Post will be successfully defended, but I am certain every exertion will be made by the troops to secure the possession of that honor to themselves and their country, which they so frequently anticipate in reflection. If any more troops are ordered here, and should I continue in command of the Post for any length of time, I would beg your Excellency to order my brigade to compose part of the garrison. Two regiments of that brigade are perfectly acquainted with the country, and in that respect are better able to answer all the purposes expected from the garrison.

I am &c.,

To General Washington SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 31st of May, Sir Henry Clinton came up the Hudson with a force of about six thousand men, a fleet of seventy sailing vessels and one hundred and fifty flat-boats collected at Kingsbridge. He landed one division under General Vaughn on the east side of the river eight miles below Verplancks Point, and another, commanded by himself, on the west side of the river three miles below Stony Point. Upon the approach of the enemy, the little garrison of forty men at Stony Point, abandoned the Fort, which Clinton immediately took possession of and proceeded to fortify. Fort Lafayette at Verplancks Point held out for a time, but unable to endure the assault of Vaughn's troops and the artillery fire from Stony Point and the vessels, the seventy men composing the garrison surrendered, June 2. The capture of the forts, as Clinton intended, completely interrupted our communications by way of King's

Ferry and in many ways was productive of great inconvenience to our army. But the rapid advance of the eastern troops rendered any further attempts impracticable, and Clinton soon returned to New York.

The following letter from General Parsons to Governor Clinton, written at the time of Sir Henry Clinton's raid, shows how uncontrollable were the militia and how little they could be depended upon for the defense of the Post:—

WEST POINT, *June 7, 1779.*

DEAR SIR.—I have seen your letter to General McDougall respecting the militia, and am concerned that any representations should be made which should induce you to imagine that the question relative to the militia is a dispute about command or rank. I think it an exceeding improper time to draw these rights in question, and am as well satisfied that Colonel Malcom should use his discretion about conducting the militia, as to have any concern myself about the matter; indeed I choose it and have a very good opinion of Colonel Malcom as an officer and a gentleman; but, Sir, I am ordered here to be answerable for the safety of this Post, and am informed three thousand men are the garrison, of which part is from your militia; of the latter I find none. My guard, therefore, and patrols, scouts &c. are as numerous as though the militia were not out. I have no returns from them, nor any information respecting their guards &c.; in short, they are so uncontrollable by my orders that I cannot consider myself as accountable for this Post, which is to be defended by three thousand men, when a sixth or fifth part are deficient, and when I have no such controlling power as to compel them to come in when I call. There's no understanding between me and Colonel Malcom on the subject, but I must have men under my command if I am to answer for their conduct.

I believe most of the militia are well posted at present, but when I shall get them in, if wanted, I cannot tell. Colonel Tuston with his regiment came into the Fort to day, but I believe most of them go off to-morrow. I wish you would come over and see them.

I am, Sir, your obedt. servt.,

To Governor Clinton. SAML. H. PARSONS.

In answer to a request from General Washington for his opinion as to the proper disposition of the army now that the enemy has returned to New York, General Parsons writes as follows:—

WEST POINT, *June 12, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—General Patterson joined his brigade last evening and is now at the Point. When the public service will admit, I shall be happy to join my brigade at such place as will most conduce to the general welfare.

Your Excellency was pleased to desire my opinion of the disposition to be made of the army. Under all circumstances I think three thousand men should be assigned for garrisoning this Post, by which I understand the Forts on the Point and Highlands near Rock-Hill, and the Island where Fort Constitution was.

On the east side the River, a force should be kept in the Highlands sufficient to prevent the enemy occupying the hills there which may cover the Works, which will exceedingly distress this Post. The advance of those troops may safely be at or near the village; this I think necessary, because those grounds cannot be held by this garrison without new Works are constructed and the garrison increased. The remainder of the army will be well posted in or near Smith's Clove with a detachment advanced between Fort Montgomery and near the Furnace. As this Post or the Army are the only capital objects the enemy can propose, I do not know a better disposition which can be made at present to defeat their designs than what may be formed on the ideas before expressed.

I have nothing new this day. Neither my scouts nor boats are yet returned. I should be obliged to your Excellency to be informed what Congress have resolved respecting an Aid-de-Camp for a brigadier, that I may recommend one if allowed.

I am &c.,

To General Washington SAML. H. PARSONS.

The enemy being in possession of Verplancks and Stony Points, Washington, on the 23d of June, 1779, left the main body of the army at Smiths Clove under the command of General Putnam, and removed his headquarters to New Windsor, just north of the Highlands, where he could be nearer to the Forts and in a better position to direct the different parts of the Army on both sides of the river. Major General Heath having been placed in command on the east side of the Hudson, Major General McDougall was transferred to West Point. Parsons in accordance with his request, was permitted to join his brigade, which was still encamped directly opposite West Point, with instructions to send fatigue parties daily across the

river to assist in constructing the Works. Nixon's brigade was stationed on Constitution Island and Huntington's was well advanced on the main road to Fishkill. The great object in view in this disposition of the troops was to guard against any attack which the enemy might make upon the Posts in the Highlands.

On the 25th of June, General Heath wrote to General Parsons from his Headquarters at the Danforth House, as follows:—

DEAR SIR.—I have this moment received a letter from his Excellency, General Washington, in which is a paragraph in the following words: "I think it will be advisable to detach a couple hundred men towards Robinson's Stores at Mahopac Pond, to march light and with caution, endeavoring to magnify their numbers to the inhabitants. This may serve to check the enemy and help discover their design."

In consequence whereof you will please to detach as soon as may be, one Field Officer, and one hundred Light Infantry properly officered; this detachment from your brigade will be joined by one hundred from General Huntington's brigade. As I do not fully know the best route, I request you would direct one and point out to General Huntington the place where the infantry of the two brigades shall form a junction, and at what hour. My dear Sir, let no time be lost. If possible, let the men have a little rum with them and such provisions as may be necessary.

The Assembly of Connecticut having sent Colonel Chandler to camp to pay the troops of that State the forty-five thousand pounds promised them the previous April, Thomas Mumford of Groton, a member of the legislature who had taken an active part in raising the money, wrote as follows to General Parsons respecting the matter:—

HARTFORD, *June 4, 1779.*

DEAR SIR.—You will receive this from the hand of Colonel Chandler of Newtown, who the Assembly have ordered to pay our officers and soldiers the forty-five thousand pounds promised them the first of April last. I refer you to him for the part I have acted to procure and have this money paid. I have urged the necessity of some more effectual methods being taken to prevent desertion. The answer is, there are laws now fully adequate for that purpose

and this forty-five thousand pounds being paid they hope to hear of no more leaving the service. Colonel Chandler being one of the committee to ascertain our deficiency in the eight battalions assigned us for this campaign, and the most expedient method to raise them, I refer you to him for what is done. I still hope to see our currency revive, Congress having recommended to call in the first of January next forty-five millions of dollars. The quota assigned this State is five millions, one hundred thousand, the just proportion to be ascertained hereafter. This will require taxes to the amount of fifteen shillings on the pound in addition to ten granted this year already, and the State will require five shillings more on the pound in the course of the present year, which will make in the whole thirty shillings on the pound, besides town and parish taxes &c. What do you imagine your friend Mumford's rates amount to? He is only fifteen hundred pounds in the list at thirty shillings on the pound, amounting to twenty-two hundred and fifty pounds, to which add as before hinted, town taxes &c., and he will be rated very little short of three thousand pounds. However, five hogsheads of rum will pay the whole, and if these taxes will reduce the price of that article from twenty dollars a gallon to ten and other articles in proportion, I shall esteem my three thousand pounds well laid out, and hope to dispose of more in the same way to bring goods much lower still. There will remain plenty of room when they are reduced one-half. We hear the enemy have been up North River and a heavy firing indeed, but have not been able to know the event. I will always thank you for any interesting intelligence. You know my zeal for the independence of America, which God grant we may support. Adieu for the present and rank me among the number of your very obliged and affectionate friends.

I am &c.,

THOMAS MUMFORD.

To the Hon'l. Brigadier General Parsons,
Near North River, State of New York.

Early in July, in order to create a diversion and draw away the troops from the Highlands, General Tryon invaded Connecticut with twenty-six hundred British troops. Landing in three Divisions at New Haven on the morning of the 5th, he took possession of and plundered the city and burned the shipping and buildings at Long Wharf. The next day he burned eight dwellings in East Haven. Embarking at night, he landed on the 8th at Fairfield, laid nearly the whole town in ashes and

carried off considerable plunder. Crossing the Sound to Huntington for supplies, he returned on the night of the 11th, and attacked Norwalk early on the morning of the 12th, destroying all but a few scattered houses. In all this he was guilty of the most savage atrocities. Women, old men and children were the victims of his brutality. While Norwalk was burning, as tradition has it, he sat in a rocking chair at his headquarters on a little eminence near the town, a delighted spectator of the ruin of a helpless people.

As soon as Washington learned of the invasion, he directed General Parsons to hasten to Connecticut to aid and encourage the militia in their efforts at resistance. The following letters of July 9th and 11th, written by Parsons to Washington, show the part which Parsons took in the affair. A fuller and more detailed account of the depredations committed by General Tryon are to be found in Parsons' letters to Washington of the 14th and 20th, and to General Heath of the 12th, not given here.

REDDING, *July 9, 1779, 10 P. M.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I have this moment arrived here after a tour of sixty miles since eleven o'clock last night. The few militia at New Haven behaved exceedingly well, repulsed the enemy several times, and considerable loss was suffered by the enemy. They burned a number of houses at East and West Haven, and plundered New Haven. They have destroyed Fairfield, almost every house; the abuses of women, children and old men are unparalled. They embarked from Fairfield yesterday and passed over the Sound, but there is reason to think they design an attack on Norwalk and the other towns. General Wolcott has received an express informing him that four thousand of the enemy are in possession of Horseneck and marching eastward. I have written to Colonel Wayland, and the small number of infantry, desiring them to march to the coast. I hope it will be agreeable to your Excellency's intentions. I hear nothing of Glover's brigade. Is it possible to send one thousand Continental troops? They will serve to steady the militia and render them a formidable body. I will write you from Norwalk, where I shall be to-night.

I am your Excellency's obedient servant,

To General Washington SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

To this General Washington replied as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS, *July 10, 1779.*

DEAR SIR.—I have received your favor of the 9th from Luddington's and Redding. It gives me great concern to hear of the ravages of the enemy. The conduct of the militia at New Haven does them the highest honor. I had heard of it before through several channels. I have written to General Heath to move with the two Connecticut Brigades towards the enemy by way of Crompond in the first instance, and from thence to Ridgefield and Bedford, which I hope will animate the militia, and in some measure prevent the enemy's incursions.

July 11th.

It is probable the public may have occasion, or at least wish, to know at some period the extent of the enemy's depredations and cruelties; indeed, it is right that the world should know them. I therefore request, that you will endeavor, as far as opportunity will permit, to ascertain as precisely as you can what number of houses they have destroyed in their expedition up the Sound, distinguishing the towns in which they were, and every other outrage that they have committed. I shall be glad to receive a printed copy of Gen. Tryon's proclamation which he has published.

I am dear Sir, &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

WILTON, *July 11th, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—In my last I informed you that the enemy landed last night. This morning the enemy on their advance were met by the militia and some skirmishing ensued, but without considerable effect on either side. At about six o'clock, the troops under Gen. Wolcott and my small detachment of about one hundred and fifty Continental troops, joined and took possession of an eminence at the north end of the town. The enemy advanced in our front and on our left flank until about nine o'clock, when they were checked in their progress by the vigorous exertions of the parties of militia and Continental troops sent out to oppose them, and in turn were compelled to retire from hill to hill, sometimes in great disorder. We continued to advance upon them until nearly eleven o'clock, when a column having nearly gained our right flank, the militia in the center gave way and retreated in disorder. This gave the enemy possession of our ground. Gen. Wolcott, who commanded the militia, exerted himself upon this occasion to rally the troops and bring them to order again, but without effect until they had retired about two miles, when some troops being again formed, returned to the aid of the right and left wings, who had retired

but a small distance and in order. With these the enemy were pursued again and retreated with precipitation to their ships.

I have the pleasure to assure your Excellency, the Continental troops without exception, they being all engaged, behaved with the greatest bravery. Capt. Betts, who was the first engaged with the enemy and who continued longest in the action, deserves particular notice for his great fortitude and prudent conduct in the battle. He continued advancing on the enemy until the center of the main body gave way; and he and his party, advanced nearly a mile at the time, and by his prudence was able to effect a regular retreat without any considerable loss. Capt. Eells on the right, and Capt. Sherman on the left, were also engaged, and when obliged to retire, kept their order and retreated with regularity. A body of militia (I think they were commanded by Maj. Porter) and another considerable detachment, deserve honorable mention to be made of them.

I am not yet able to ascertain our own or the enemy's loss, but in my next shall be able to give a more particular account. In my handful of Continental troops I have lost five men killed and Lieutenant Gibbs and six privates wounded. I don't know of any missing: some loss the militia have sustained. I am satisfied the loss of the enemy must have been considerable.

About twenty boats landed on the west side of the harbor at five o'clock, and immediately began to set fire to the buildings. They completed burning the town at about twelve o'clock. This appeared to have been their sole business as they did not stay to carry off any plunder of considerable value. A few Tory houses are left which I hope our people will burn, as the burners are here and have committed no act by which the public can seize them. I imagine Stamford will be the next object to wreak their hellish malice upon. To that place I shall repair to-morrow. I am fully persuaded that five hundred more men such as the brave militia I have before mentioned, and the one hundred and fifty Continentals, would have given the enemy a total defeat. The numbers of the enemy were about two thousand—our numbers between nine and eleven hundred.

I am dear General, your obedient servant,

To General Washington. SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

July 12 Parsons again wrote from Wilton asking for a supply of ammunition, as his stock was nearly exhausted. The same day he wrote to Washington, expressing his gratification that the Connecticut Division had been ordered to the coast, General Heath's orders of July 10, directed the first and

second brigades to march the next morning; "Parsons' brigade to strike, pack and load its tents as early as possible, and join Huntington's brigade, which is to remain at its present post on the Fishkill road ready to march as soon as the junction is formed, both brigades to be as little encumbered as possible." The Division marched as ordered, but not early enough to intercept Tryon, much to the regret of Parsons, who would have liked nothing better than to have had the opportunity to answer Tryon's insulting proclamation with the rifles of his Continentals. On the 14th, Parsons wrote from Stamford detailing the positions of the British and their cruel treatment of prisoners. On the 20th, he reported, as requested by Washington, the number of buildings destroyed by the enemy in Fairfield and Norwalk and gave further details as to the enemy's cruelty to prisoners. According to his return there were burned in Fairfield on the 9th, ninety-seven dwellings, sixty-seven barns, forty-eight stores, two meeting-houses, a church, the Court House, jail and two school houses; in Norwalk on the 11th, one hundred and thirty dwellings, eighty-seven barns, twenty-two stores, seventeen shops, four mills, one church and one meeting-house. The aggregate loss at New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk amounted to nearly half a million of dollars.

The following is the proclamation published by Tryon in Connecticut, a printed copy of which Washington desired Parsons to procure for him:—

By Commodore Sir George Collier, commander in chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels in North America, and Major Gen. William Tryon, commanding his Majesty's land forces on a separate expedition.

Address to the inhabitants of Connecticut.

The ungenerous and wanton insurrection against the sovereignty of Great Britain into which this colony has been deluded by the artifices of designing men for private purposes, might well justify in you every fear which conscious guilt could form, respecting the intentions of the present armament.

Your town, your property, yourselves, lie within the grasp of the power whose forbearance you have ungenerously construed into fear, but whose lenity has persisted in its mild and noble efforts, even though branded with the most unworthy imputation.

The existence of a single habitation on your defenseless coast

ought to be a subject of constant reproof to your ingratitude. Can the strength of your whole province cope with the force which might at any time be poured through every district in your country? You are conscious it cannot. Why, then, will you persist in a ruinous and ill-judged resistance? We hoped that you would recover from the frenzy which has distracted this unhappy country; and we believe the day to be near come when the greater part of this continent will begin to blush at their delusion. You, who lie so much in our power, afford that most striking monument of our mercy, and therefore ought to set the first example of returning to allegiance.

Reflect on what gratitude requires of you; if that is sufficient to move you, attend to your own interest; we offer you a refuge against the distress which you universally acknowledge broods with increasing and intolerable weight over all your country.

Leaving you to consult with each other upon this invitation, we do now declare that whosoever shall be found and remain in peace, at his usual place of residence, shall be shielded from any insult, either to his person or property, excepting such as bear offices, either civil or military, under your present usurped government, of whom it will be further required that they shall give proofs of their penitence and voluntary submission: and they shall then partake of the like immunity.

Those whose folly and obstinacy may slight this favorable warning, must take notice that they are not to expect a continuance of that leniency which their inveteracy would now render blamable.

Given on board his Majesty's ship, Camilla, on the Sound, July 4, 1779.

GEORGE COLLIER.
WILLIAM TRYON.

The following letter from General Parsons to Thomas Mumford of Groton relates to the conduct of the enemy during Tryon's raid:—

HIGHLANDS, *July 20, 1779.*

MY DEAR SIR.—The constant fatigue and close application to business which I have necessarily been subjected to for ten days past has prevented my answering your two last kind letters till this time; but having last night returned to this station from the scene of savage barbarity committed by Britons on our coast, I take this early opportunity to return you my sincere thanks for the expressions of kindness and friendship in your two last, and if I have in any degree merited your good opinion, I hope no part of my future conduct will give you occasion to alter it. I am sorry my young friend has quitted his rank in the Line; I believe he might still have

the appointment, but how far he would be willing to serve without rank and with only the additional staff pay his own feelings will best decide. I shall for the present command the Connecticut Division and will not make the appointment of my Aid until I hear again from you.

Your repeated acts of kindness make me blush upon every new tender of services or presents; but a turtle will overcome the modesty of almost any person; Fairfield is a place from which I can procure anything.

The scandalous savage conduct of Britons in their late descents on the coast exceeds description. I have taken measures to ascertain the principal facts at the several places they have visited. At Norwalk they have not perpetrated any considerable number of acts of cruelty on the persons of the inhabitants. They were opposed from their first progress to the town until their re-embarkation, and their retreat was rapid and precipitate after burning the greatest part of the town. Our force did not exceed 1000 men; the enemy between 2000 & 3000, yet in every instance where we attacked, the enemy fled; this left them no time to plunder or offer much insult to the inhabitants, but enough was done to show it was want of time only prevented. Some of our soldiers who were killed had their skulls blown off after they were dead, and in one instance a soldier surrendered himself a prisoner after bravely defending himself a considerable time; they demanded his arms which he delivered; when he was disarmed they immediately made several thrusts with their bayonets, two of which entered him and badly wounded him; they then presented their arms to fire upon him when he broke away and ran under the discharge of all their pieces and has got in safely & likely to recover. One ball passed through his arm which he will lose.

I congratulate you on our important success in taking Stony Point. The cannon and stores &c. have fallen into our hands with a garrison of five hundred men with a very trifling loss. I wish to hear from you whenever you have leisure. Please to present my affectionate regards to your son & compliments to the good girls of the family and believe me

Dr. Sr. yr. much obliged friend,

To Thomas Mumford, Groton. SAM H. PARSONS.

The British loss, according to General Tryon's report, was 20 killed, 96 wounded and 32 missing, showing efficient work on the part of our troops.

Before invading Connecticut, General Tryon addressed to Generals Putnam and Parsons the following letter:

NEW YORK, *June 18th, 1779.*

SIR.—By one of his Majesty's ships of war which arrived here last night from Georgia, we have intelligence that the British forces were in possession of Fort Johnstone, near Charleston, the first of June. Surely it is time for rational Americans to wish for a reunion with the parent state, and to adopt such measures as will most speedily effect it.

I am your very humble, obedient servant,

WM. TRYON, *Major General.*

To Gen. Putnam, or, in his absence, to Gen. Parsons.

The following is General Parsons' very characteristic reply, in the course of which he gives General Tryon a much larger budget of news than he was favored with by Tryon. The love which Parsons felt for the British and his anxiety for "a reunion with the parent state," appear in every line.

CAMP, HIGHLANDS, *September 7th, 1779.*

SIR.—I should have paid an earlier attention to your polite letter of the 18th of June, had I not entertained some hope of a personal interview with you in your descents upon the defenseless towns of Connecticut, to execute your master's vengeance upon rebellious women and formidable hosts of boys and girls, who were induced by insidious proclamations to remain in those hapless places, and who, if they had been suffered to continue in the enjoyment of that peace their age and sex entitled them to expect from civilized nations, you undoubtedly supposed would prove the scourge of Britain's veteran troops, and pluck from you those laurels with which that fiery expedition so plentifully crowned you. But your sudden departure from Norwalk, and the particular attention you paid to your personal safety when at that place, and the prudent resolution you took to suffer the town of Stamford to escape the conflagration to which you had devoted Fairfield and Norwalk, prevented my wishes on that head. This will, I hope, sufficiently apologize for my delay in answering your last letter.

By my letters from France, we have intelligence that his Catholic Majesty declared war against Great Britain in June last; that the combined fleets of France and Spain, amounting to more than sixty sail of the line, having formed a junction with twenty-five thou-

sand land forces, are now meditating a blow on the British dominions in Europe; and that the grand fleet of old England finds it very inconvenient to venture far from their harbors. In the West Indies, Admiral Bryon, having greatly suffered in a naval engagement, escaped with his ships in a very shattered condition, to St. Christopher's, and covered his fleet under the batteries on the shores, and has suffered himself to be insulted in the road of that island by the French Admiral; and Count de Estaing, after reducing the islands of St. Vincent and Granada to the obedience of France, defeating and disabling the British fleet, has sailed for Hispaniola, where it is expected he will be joined by the Spanish fleet in those seas and attack Jamaica.

The storming your strong works at Stony Point and capturing the garrison by our brave troops; the brilliant successes of General Sullivan against your faithful friends, the savages; the surprise of Paulus Hook by Major Lee; the flight of Gen. Prevost from Carolina; and your shamefully shutting yourselves up in New York and the neighboring islands, are so fully within your knowledge as scarcely to need repetition.

Surely it is time for Britons to rouse from their delusive dreams of conquest, and pursue such systems of future conduct as will save their tottering empire from total destruction.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Major General Tryon. SAML. H. PARSONS.

While Parsons was absent in Connecticut, a brilliant and successful attempt was made by General Anthony Wayne to surprise and capture Stony Point. On the night of the 15th of June, approaching the Fort from the rear and moving silently along the narrow causeway crossing the swamp, the assailants reached the abatis before they were discovered, and dashing forward with fixed bayonets regardless of the fire, were soon in possession of the Fort. The total loss to the British was over six hundred men. Unable to garrison and hold the Post, they abandoned it after removing the guns and stores to West Point. Within a few days, however, the British reoccupied it with a much larger force.

About the same time, General Sullivan, with the Continental troops which had been gathered in the Wyoming Valley, began his march up the Susquehanna, to devastate and destroy the country of the hostile tribes of the Six Nations, and prevent, if

possible, a repetition of the savage massacres of Cherry Valley and Wyoming. He was joined at the mouth of the Chemung by General James Clinton with a second division of sixteen hundred men which he had organized at Schenectady and brought down the Susquehanna by way of Otsego Lake. The combined force, amounting to about five thousand men, ascending the Chemung, encountered a considerable force of British, Tories and Indians near the present site of Elmira. A sharp engagement ensued in which Sullivan was victorious. By the 2d of September, the little army had reached the head of Seneca Lake where it burned the Indian villages and destroyed the orchards and crops. On the 14th it was marching through the beautiful Genesee Valley, the home of the Senecas, with its cultivated farms, gardens and orchards, indicating a considerable degree of civilization. All this was made a wilderness. Forty villages were burned with immense quantities of corn in the fields and in granaries. The blackened waste would have delighted Tryon's heart. But Sullivan had only of necessity administered to the Indians the medicine they had so freely dispensed to the whites. The effect on the Indians was not what was expected. While staggered by the severity of their punishment, a feeling of hatred was kindled among all the tribes which could only be satisfied by blood.

At a Council of General Officers held July 26, 1779, General Washington submitted queries to its members upon which he asked their opinions. The following is the opinion of General Parsons:—

CAMP NEAR ROBINSON'S, *July 27, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The supposed strength of the enemy, and our own numbers and preparations, as stated by your Excellency to the Council, will in my opinion oblige us to adopt a defensive system, until our army is considerably increased in numbers and other preparations for offensive operations made. The Posts in the Highlands are of so much importance as ought to induce us to defend them at every hazard; for that purpose I suppose three thousand men necessary to be left at the Point and Posts dependent, if the army moves to any great distance. Forage for the horses and cattle will necessarily oblige us to remove very soon.

I believe if the right of the army should take a position at Peekskill, and extend the left nearly to the post now occupied by General

Glover, and wait events, it will in no measure oppose a system of defense; they will be perfectly safe from attack, will be easily furnished with necessary supplies, and be in a better situation to carry on a partisan war than in their present position; and can be ready in season to relieve the Forts in case of an attack; and to oppose with prospects of success any attempts which may be made to destroy the towns on the coast or frontier of Connecticut. If we can procure a sufficiency of military stores for the purpose, I am of opinion an attempt to dispossess the enemy of Verplancks and Stony Point ought to be attempted; this, if successful, would disgrace the British arms, animate our soldiery to greater exertions, and enable us to move with safety to a greater distance from West Point and thereby cover a larger extent of country from the enemy's depredations; besides, they will be removed to so great a distance from the Point as to put it out of their power to make any sudden attack upon the Fort; if this enterprise should be undertaken, both sides of the river should be attempted at the same time, because the Post on the east side cannot be carried whilst the enemy remain possessed of Stony Point. In this position of the army the enemy can advance no part of their force to any considerable distance from their main army without danger of surprise, and we shall be able to harrass them constantly and perhaps compel them to retire still further.

I cannot but lament our inability to attack their army and dispossess them of New York. It appears to me of great importance to be effected this campaign; at the close of it a great proportion of our army will be disbanded, and the present state of the country affords little prospects of recruiting.

It is a second attempt to dispossess the enemy of Stony Point which Parsons thinks should be attempted, the British having reoccupied the Fort immediately after Wayne dismantled and abandoned it.

Highlands, August 3, 1779, Parsons writes to one John Brooks, of Stratford, in reply to a request for a copy of a letter from Capt. Walker, said to contain matter derogatory to Brooks' character: "I certainly should be unworthy the confidence of any man of honor if I should expose it, much more if I should give or suffer copies to be taken, and I cannot suppose you had considered the matter properly when you made the application;" and then he assures him that he has received no letter of the kind referred to, but has seen a certificate signed

by Walker and directed to the "Friends of Liberty," in which it was asserted that some of the principal inhabitants of the First Society of Stratford had applied to Doctor Johnson and others to use their influence with the British officers to preserve the town from destruction, and that this was the only paper under Walker's hand he had seen respecting the matter; "that when your name was mentioned as probably one of the signers to the application, I replied I was certain you were a gentleman of more firmness and of better principles than to be a party to such infamous and mischievous transactions and I am sorry to find myself so much mistaken."

The following is from General Parsons to his friend, Thomas Mumford at Groton:—

REDDING, *August 18, 1779.*

DEAR SIR.—The expedition to Penobscott I feel myself much interested to hear the event of, and your concern must also be of the same kind, my son and your son-in-law being aboard the same fleet. I must therefore beg you to inform me the issue of that matter if you can. The fleet which sailed from New York the first of August I fear has intercepted our fleet unless they had finished the business before their arrival.

The West India accounts of the success of the French navy gain credit in our camps; if it is true, I think it more important in its consequences to us than any event which has taken place since the war; so much I believe is certain, that, or some other important event, has so disconcerted the measures of the enemy that they scarcely know what system to adopt; and all public appearances promise a speedy close of the war.

But what shall we say of the internal state of our country; every effort to reduce our fellow citizens to reason and a sense of their own true interest seems to prove abortive, and our currency almost destroyed amidst the greatest exertions to save it. Can nothing be done to remedy this evil and save from ruin those who have trusted the public faith.

As to the army, they are patient under sufferings in full confidence of a final satisfaction. I believe another petition will be presented next session praying an adjustment for the two last years which I am sure you will become an advocate to effect. I have wrote you several letters since I have received one, and imagine you was not at home or was too much engaged in important business to allow you time to write.

I have wrote Congress for leave of absence from my command for a few months or a discharge. If either are granted me I hope to see you soon. Please to present my respectful compliments to the young ladies of your family and to my friend Lt. Mumford and accept the sincere wishes for your happiness.

From yr. obliged friend & humble servt.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

19th.—I this moment hear the ship Trumbull has at last got to New London & that Capt. Hinman commands her. I wish you to use your influence with Capt. Hinman to keep open the third Lieutenancy of the ship for my son on his return from the cruise with Capt. Saltonstall. I shall write Capt. Hinman on the subject.

This letter of August 6th, 1779, to President Jay explains itself. It breathes so patriotic a spirit and shows so well the situation of many officers of the Revolutionary Army, that it is given here in full.

SIR.—I am one of the number who entered the service of my country in April, 1775, and have persevered to this time from a full conviction of the necessity of opposing the power of Great Britain, and securing by arms those inalienable rights which we hold not for ourselves only but in trust for future generations. With these sentiments I left the pleasures of domestic life and all prospects of acquiring property in a firm expectation of securing by arms the little I possessed and trusting in the justice of my country and relying on the public faith plighted to me and every other possessor of their bills of credit, which I considered as sacred as the promises and covenants of individuals. I invested my all in bills of credit and the public loans, the better to enable me to continue in the service of my country without having my attention too much drawn to the care of improving my own estate. I early sold my real estate and collected my dues at the nominal value of the Bills in full confidence that my country would fulfill the promises made to those who gave credit to their money, and although I have not invested all my moneys in the Funds, I have not a shilling but the public have many times availed themselves of.

When the various Departments have in the years 1777 and 1778 been wholly destitute of money and in many instances almost of credit, I have advanced to my last shilling without interest or hope of reward, and received the nominal sums again when they were

able to pay, sometimes after six and ten months waiting which prevented my investing in the Loans the bills I owned.

I have been concerned in no trade of any sort to increase my estate since the war, but have rested contented with the reflection that at some future period my country would do me justice by fulfilling their contract and paying their debt according to the nominal value of the Bill, as was promised, in which case I should possess a competence, with frugality, to support me in old age and afford that education to a numerous family which I wished to give them.

But, Sir, I was greatly alarmed when I saw two days since the resolution of Congress of the 29th of June last, for borrowing 20,000,000 of dollars, the 6th and 8th articles of which appear to me very clearly to be founded in principles which are inconsistent with those sentiments which I had entertained of the public faith, and as I apprehend strongly intimate a design not to redeem the Bills of Credit at their nominal value. If those are the intentions of Congress, I am one of the number who by placing full confidence in the public faith are ruined after more than four years service in the army, in which my constitution is greatly impaired and old age hastened upon me; in which every person knows I could not add to the nominal value of my estate, but for two years past must have greatly decreased it. I am to be dism'ssed with the total loss of the little remaining part, a beggar with a numerous family of small children, dependent on the charity of an uncharitable and unthankful world. If my country fails to support her independence, I am satisfied with the loss of all, and shall think myself happy in not being possessed of anything the tyrant can take from me, but as I am firmly persuaded that will not be the case, your own good sense, Sir, will determine the anxious feelings I must experience when I have sacrificed my health and the hopes and just expectations of my family to secure the liberty of my country and the ill-gotten wealth of my fellow citizens, and by a decree of Congress must lose my all as the only reward of my services.

I do not mean, Sir, to censure the measures of Congress. I don't know that my inferences from these resolutions are just, and if they are, perhaps the measures are necessary. But as I can say with truth, so I hope I shall not incur censure, when I assure you I shall become very undeservedly a victim to the public necessity.

Under these circumstances, Sir, justice to myself and family require me in the strongest manner to pay an immediate attention to secure my little from total loss. This I cannot do and remain in the public service. I therefore beg you to lay my case before Con-

gress, and if that Honorable Body design (from necessity or any other cause) to redeem their Bills at a discount from their nominal value, or not to redeem them but suffer them to die in the hands of their possessors, I beg them to discharge me from their service or grant me leave of absence to attend to my own private concerns for such time as they shall judge just and reasonable, or, if this will not consist with the public welfare, that I may be discharged from service. But if I may rest assured that Congress will redeem their Bills at the nominal value in any future period, as I began early in the cause and I think on good principles, so I wish to continue in my country's service to the close of the Dispute. As the situation of my affairs requires my immediate attention, if my fears are justly founded, I trust in the honor and justice of Congress to give an answer to my application in such season as will enable me to preserve myself from total ruin, which will inevitably happen if an answer is long delayed.

On the same day he writes respecting the same matter to Colonel Atlee in Congress, (who was with him in the fight on Battle Hill in Greenwood Cemetery during the battle of Long Island), stating briefly the substance of his letter to Congress and asking him to see that his application receives proper attention. "The short acquaintance with you was founded in misfortune (Atlee was taken prisoner in that battle and Parsons only just escaped), and as that generally begets a mutual friendship, I have on that presumption addressed this letter to you."

Parsons' letter to Congress of August 6, having been referred to the Board of Treasury and having received no letter from the Board in reply, Parsons writes, "Camp near West Point, 30th August, 1779," to Mr. Canstern, of the Board, saying that the subject of his letter "is of a nature that any considerable delay may involve me in irretrievable ruin," and requesting his attention to the matter, begs an answer.

August 29, 1779, General Parsons writes to Colonel Root in Congress, acknowledging a letter from him, and stating that he has received no answer from the Treasury Board to his letter to Congress, asks him to look into the matter for him. He then proceeds to discuss at length the effect of the depreciation of the currency on the army and suggests measures which

should be taken to afford relief. In closing he refers to the miscarriage of the expedition to Penobscott under General Lovell and the heavy loss to the States of so many transports and ships of war. "I feel myself deeply interested in that event having my son there, a midshipman in the Warren. Whether he is dead, a prisoner, or escaped I have not heard, but I have the consolation to hear he showed himself a lad of bravery and good conduct in several attacks made on the enemy by land in which he took an active part." The son referred to was his eldest son, William Walter, then nineteen years of age. The "Warren" on which he had shipped, was a United States frigate of 32 guns and the flag-ship of the squadron. When the British fleet, which had sailed from New York, August 1, appeared in the Penobscott River, Captain Saltonstall ran up the river to avoid the enemy, but unable to escape to shallow waters, he beached his ship and set her on fire. Most of his captains followed his example, though three or four vessels fell into the hands of the enemy.

That part of Parsons' letter to Colonel Root discussing the effect of the depreciation of the currency is given in full:—

A matter of greater importance is the immediate occasion of my writing at this time, the great uneasiness, and as I conceive the very just complaints of the army arising from the rapid depreciation of the currency. The officers of the army say, and in most instances with truth, that they have expended their estates, have hazarded their lives and health and sacrificed the just expectations of their families for the salvation of their country; that the depreciation of the money is so great they are unable to sustain the burden any longer; that 'tis just their wages and rations should be made good to them, and that such compensation should be made them as will in some measure make that provision for their families which their former business in life would have given them reason to expect if they had pursued it. This they say only puts them on a footing with their fellow citizens who have made their estates from the distresses of their country and they ought at least to be considered as much entitled to the favors of their country as those who have lived at their ease and amassed estates while the country was distressed by the ravages of the enemy, and those, who left their all to oppose their progress, have sunk all their interest by their patience and perseverance. This is their condition and they

are left to suffer while the war continues but without any assurance of future recompense adequate to their merits.

That they have suffered in a greater degree than any other class of men and have exhibited an example of patience which will do honor to their country and themselves, is too obvious to need proof. Although many have left the service, I know it has been with the greatest reluctance and in many instances I have known them to lament with tears the fatal necessity which forced them from the army before Britain was laid at the feet of America. But, Sir, their sufferings are now arisen to that height that they can no longer endure them. They have, I believe, through the Line of the army applied with decency to the General Officers commanding wings, divisions and brigades, begging them to use their utmost influence with Congress for redress. We have conferred with one another on the subject and should have met together and petitioned Congress on the subject, but we hear you have it under consideration and have reason to expect a decision upon the subject soon. On this idea we have agreed to suspend our application for a few weeks that we might not wound the feelings of a man of honor by an application to do that which his own sense of justice and his liberality of sentiment would have induced him to do unsolicited; and we suppose the honor and justice of our country will be more conspicuous in voluntarily granting to the army what they deem just and liberal than on any previous formal claim.

You know, Sir, and we are conscious that we have used our utmost exertions to calm the fears of the army on this head, and instill sentiments of patriotism and respect to our Superior Council into the minds of all ranks of men in the army and have hitherto succeeded beyond our expectations. For this reason only we have never applied to Congress for any consideration to be made to us, and as they have made us none, but in every respect we remain upon the first establishment in 1775, when other officers have had their wages raised 50 per cent., we find the force of this comparison stills the murmur of our officers more effectually than all other considerations. We have waited till we are as far sunk as our brethren and need the aid of Congress to save us from total ruin, and should not now have made the application but for the reasons before mentioned.

I therefore beg you would for the honor of our country and Congress prevent our application by doing us that justice which we have a right to claim, and by such acts of liberality as will tend to encourage your army and render them as sure in their prospects by continuing as by forsaking your service. I am satisfied events

which can happen will not quiet the minds of the army more than three or four weeks without a joint and unanimous application.

You will naturally ask me what are our expectations. To this question I can only answer as an individual, though I believe I have many of my sentiments. We expect, first, that our pay and all public encouragements granted us, rations, &c., be made as good to us from the first of January, 1777, as though we had been paid monthly in silver or gold, (the depreciation of silver and gold we ought to bear in common with our country); this, rigid justice requires and this I conceive we have an undoubted right to demand. Second, that you make us such liberal grants to take place at the close of the war, as will give us some reasonable prospects of compensation for our loss of health and business in life on which our families place their dependence. At that period we cannot resume our former business soon, and most of us never, to the same advantage as at the commencement of the war; besides the estates we have will be consumed in our intermediate expenses owing to the depreciation which our situation does not admit of our guarding against, whilst our fellow citizens are reaping the benefits of this rapid depreciation and can suffer no material injury because they are still in business, the emoluments of which are not injured by the fluctuating state of our currency; and you must be satisfied the officers in general were not induced to engage in service from prospects of increasing their estates; in my own case, (which is only a single instance of very many similar) I left in 1775 a profession worth two thousand dollars annually, for 600 dollars a year, which has never been increased to more than two-thirds the nominal sum of the annual profits of my profession.

I am not an advocate of half pay after the war; I know there are many objections to it, but none in my mind so great as fixing a precedent for future pensions. This may be obviated by granting a sum certain; this will be a sure estate and may be transferred. As to the grant of lands in addition, (for without money it will not answer the great purposes of fixing the prospects of a disbanded army so as to make them return to the state of good citizens), they will cost you very little and ought to be liberal. At present, you promise the general officers nothing, and to other officers nothing in comparison to the grants promised by the Crown last war. As to increasing the nominal sum of our pay during the service, I do not wish it, provided such assurances can be given me as renders the debt at the close of the war certain, so that I may consider it an estate on which my family can depend; then pay me the whole or by installments, I don't care whether in two years or in fifteen years. I hope

Congress will pay such attention to this subject as will prevent a necessity of asking what in honor and justice they ought to grant.

I still continue in the command of the Connecticut Division of the army, and am not able to find a reason for which, after more than three years service in my present rank, I shall be put to a higher command with my present rank. I don't see why Congress will not give feathers if they can't give money. Perhaps a reason may be assigned. If it is an opinion that I am not entitled by rank to promotion, or am incapable of discharging the duties of a higher command, I ought to leave the service, either that some more fit person of my rank may be appointed to my present command, or that those who are of after rank to me may not be kept back by a delicacy which Congress sometimes are troubled with about superseding officers of prior appointment. I know they have not always been troubled with those delicate feelings.

Sir Henry Clinton had written Lord George Germain the 21st of August, that further operations at the north so late in the season were impracticable, and his thoughts now turned on an expedition to South Carolina; that Verplancks and Stony Points having been seized with a view to an attack upon the Highlands, as nothing could now be done in that quarter, they became of no importance and he should probably abandon them. These Posts were abandoned October 21st. On the 25th of the same month, Rhode Island was evacuated and the troops withdrawn to New York, partly through fear of an attack from D'Estaing's fleet which was now on the coast, and partly as a measure preparatory to detaching a considerable force for the proposed expedition to South Carolina. On the 27th, in consequence of the evacuation of Verplancks and Stony Points, Parsons' Division marched down the river and went into camp in the vicinity of King's Ferry, as directed by the following Wing Orders of the 26th:—

The Connecticut Division is to march early to-morrow morning and encamp at below Peekskill. The assembly to beat at half-past eight o'clock in the First Brigade, (Parsons') and the brigade to march immediately. The assembly to beat at nine o'clock in the Second Brigade, (Huntington's) and the troops to march as soon as possible. The First Brigade will halt at the village until the Second comes up, when they are to join and march to their new camp in division.

The Wing Orders of the 29th read:—

General Parsons will please to order such guards and pickets as may be necessary for the security of the camp between Verplanck's Point and the New Bridge on the Croton River. The Connecticut Division has made great proficiency in the exercises and maneuvers. The Major General is anxious that they not only retain what they have already acquired, but that they continue their endeavors to complete themselves in discipline.

The orders of the 22d had been particularly complimentary to the Division:—

It is with particular satisfaction that the Major General beheld the regularity and soldierlike behavior of the troops of the Connecticut Line at exercise yesterday, and he has the pleasure to acquaint them that the Baron Steuben, the Inspector General, publicly acknowledged that they have made as great proficiency in performing the exercises and maneuvers as any troops without exception in the army. A few things only remain to be learned and practiced to make them finished soldiers, and the Major General flatters himself that by the attention of the officers and ready obedience of the soldiers, these will be soon acquired.

While in camp at the Ferry, details were sent from the Division to complete the redoubts on the Heights under the direction of Colonel Gouvion of the Engineers, and to repair the works vacated by the enemy. The strictest discipline was insisted on, and the orders were very stringent as to the appropriation by the soldiers of private property and the shooting of game in the vicinity of camp. To secure against surprise by the enemy, the river was carefully watched by the guard-boats and no boat was permitted to go below the Ferry without a written pass from a general officer.

The campaign of 1779 was now closed. All the British troops at the North, by order of the ministry, had been concentrated in New York, and Washington was already preparing to go into winter quarters. The only achievements of the enemy during the year, were Tryon's two marauding expeditions and the capture of Verplancks and Stony Points, certainly not much to boast of, but Clinton could have done little without

large reinforcements, and Great Britain, just at that time, had her hands too full at home to give much attention to the conquest of her rebellious Colonies. Spain had declared war against her; powerful French and Spanish fleets were hovering about her coasts threatening invasion. Her commerce, the life-blood of her finances, was being preyed upon by the American and French cruisers. The "Serapis" and the "Countess of "Scarborough," while convoying a fleet of forty sail of merchantmen, were captured by John Paul Jones with the "Bonhomme Richard," in one of the most desperate naval engagements on record and in full view of his Majesty's dominions. But though in sore distress, England put forth her strength as was her wont in an emergency, and voted eighty-five thousand seamen, thirty-five thousand soldiers and one hundred million dollars. Such an exhibition of power and determination on the part of the mother country while her affairs were in so disordered a condition, could not have been otherwise than depressing, but with it all America showed neither dismay nor discouragement.

CHAPTER XIX

WINTER QUARTERS AT MORRISTOWN. THE SPY SYSTEM OF THE REVOLUTION. "MIDSHIPMAN BILLY." PARSONS ASKS CONGRESS TO ACCEPT HIS RESIGNATION. HIS ESTATE. SUPERVISES RECRUITING IN CONNECTICUT. CONDITION OF THE ARMY.

December, 1779—July, 1780

BY the latter part of November, 1779, Washington had completed his arrangements for winter quarters for the army. The cavalry he proposed to quarter in Connecticut on account of the "abundance and conveniency" of forage. A brigade was to be stationed at Danbury for the protection of the inhabitants along the Sound. A sufficient garrison was to be left in the Highlands and a small force at the entrance of Smiths Clove. The main army under Washington's immediate command, was to be quartered near Morristown, New Jersey, where it would be well placed to observe the enemy in New York and to guard against any hostile movement. The Connecticut Division, which heretofore had wintered east of the Hudson, was this season to encamp with the main army. In accordance with this arrangement, orders were issued from Wing headquarters, November 17 and 18, to break camp at Peekskill and begin the march into New Jersey. The orders of the 18th directed "the Connecticut Division to move over Hudson's River to-morrow and camp as near Stony Point as they can find good wood and water. While the army remains at Haverstraw, they are to furnish the Captain's guard at the ferry, and General Howe's Division the other guards." This movement was delayed until the 25th, when the Division, with General Parsons in command, crossed the river and encamped near Haverstraw. Upon the removal of Washington's headquarters from New Windsor, Gates was offered the command in the Highlands, but his private affairs demanding his attention, leave of absence was granted him at his request, and the command given to General Heath. This

arrangement brought Parsons' Division immediately under Washington's orders. November 27, the Division encamped for the night near Kakeat, Parsons taking up his quarters at Judge Cox's house. On the 28th, the march was continued to Ramapo, and on the 29th and 30th to Persipany (now Patterson). The next day the Division marched to the grounds assigned it for winter quarters, situated on the slope of a high hill about three miles south of Morristown, where it commenced to build the log huts which were to shelter it during the severest and most trying winter experienced in any year of the Revolution. Letters from the camp describe the sufferings of the troops during these dreary months from the intensity of the cold, the depth and frequency of the snows and the lack of food, clothing, shoes and blankets.

General Putnam, the senior Major General in Connecticut, had up to this time been the nominal commander of the Connecticut Division, but being for the greater part of the time absent with the main army, the actual command had now for nearly eighteen months devolved on General Parsons; for, although Benedict Arnold, now in command at Philadelphia, ranked next to Putnam, his assignments had always been outside the State and the Division, in consequence, had never come under his orders. General Putnam, in December, 1779, while on a visit to Hartford, was stricken with paralysis and became totally incapacitated, so that from this time on General Parsons was the Division commander by virtue of his seniority. This Division—the flower of Connecticut soldiery—was not surpassed by any corps in the army. Its position in the general line of battle, as fixed by Washington's order of December 17, was on the left of the first line. During Parsons' absence in Connecticut, the Division was commanded successively by St. Clair, DeKalb and Huntington, and, in the latter part of April, by Lafayette, who had just returned from France. In February it was detached to strengthen the lines in the vicinity of Elizabeth and Newark, where it remained until the Morristown camp was broken up in June, when it returned to its old quarters near Robinson's house in the Highlands.

Putnam, when taken ill in December, had retired to his farm in Pomfret, where, amid quiet surroundings, the old General,

for whom everyone felt sympathy, had by spring so far recovered his health that he was able to walk about, and, with assistance, to write the following letter to Washington:—

POMFRET, *May 29, 1780.*

DEAR SIR.—I cannot forbear informing your Excellency by the return of Major Humphreys to Camp, of the state of my health from the first of my illness to the present time.

After I was prevented from coming on to the Army by a stroke of the paralytic kind, which deprived me in a great measure of the use of my right leg and arm, I retired to my plantation, and have been gradually growing better ever since. I have now so far gained the use of my limbs, especially of my leg, as to be able to walk with very little impediment and to ride on horseback tolerably well. In other respects I am in perfect health, and enjoy the comforts and pleasures of life with as good a relish as most of my neighbors. Although I should not be able to resume a command in the Army, I propose to myself the happiness of making a visit and seeing my friends there sometime in the course of the campaign.

Not being able to hold the pen in my own hand, I am obliged to make use of another to express with how much regard and esteem, I am &c.

P. S.—I am making a great effort to use my hand to make the initials of my name for the first time.

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

It appears from the following letters that Parsons, in December, was stationed ten or fifteen miles southeast of Morristown, probably in charge of the outposts, where he was in position to observe the enemy and obtain early intelligence of their movements. On the 16th, writing to General Washington from Meeker's house in Springfield, after reporting what he had learned as to affairs in New York and the extent to which illicit trading was carried on, he adds:—

I believe a regular channel of intelligence can be established immediately to New York, but the undertaker must have it made to his interest to pursue so hazardous a business. I am suspicious that the inducements before have been a permission to trade. This license I am by no means at liberty to grant or even wink at, nor am I authorized to promise money. If your Excellency thinks it necessary to do anything in the matter, your direction shall be punctually attended to.

In reply to this Washington wrote as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS AT MORRISTOWN, *December 18, 1779.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I am fully of the opinion that those people who undertake to procure intelligence under cover of carrying produce into New York and bringing goods out in return, attend more to their own emoluments than to the business with which they are charged; and we have generally found their information so vague and trifling that there is no placing dependence upon it. Besides, it opens a door to a very extensive and pernicious traffic. You seem to intimate that an advantageous channel of intelligence might be established by the means of money. Be pleased to make enquiry into this matter, and if you find proper persons for the purpose, let me know the terms and the sum requisite, that I may see whether it comes within the limits of our scanty funds in hard money, as I suppose that kind is meant. Be pleased to say whether that or paper is the object.

I approve of the measures you have taken with the flag-boats; and it is my wish that those persons, whoever they may be, who are concerned in the practice of bringing goods from New York, may be discovered. I am not acquainted with the laws of the State respecting the seizure of goods, but I wish you to inform yourself of them, and put them strictly in execution.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. GEO. WASHINGTON.

On the 23d, Parsons further reports the intelligence brought in by spies as to affairs in New York, and particularly in regard to the movements of troops and ships. On the 26th, he writes from Westfield, reporting information as to the size of the fleet and the number of men on board. This information related to Clinton's preparations for his southern expedition and was very important as affecting future operations against New York.

Spies were employed on the most extensive scale by both sides during the Revolutionary War. We had in England a perfect corps of spies. In New York Washington maintained an organization throughout the war, and particularly in 1779 and 1780, that under the guise of zealous loyalists, never failed to advise him instantly of any considerable movement. Many prominent persons within the enemy's lines, then trusted and lauded by the British commander and officials, and to this day

believed to have been strong Tories, were in fact Whig spies. Washington's system for obtaining secret intelligence was thorough and efficient, and his sources and methods were many and utterly unknown and unsuspected at the time, and each was independent of the others. The entire direction of the system, especially after the defection of Arnold, he retained in his own hands. Every prominent leader in the war had also his own private agents and means of obtaining information. From the fact of his commanding in Westchester and along the Sound during so large a part of the war, General Parsons had of necessity probably as much to do with the spy system and kept as many agents in his employ, as any other general officer except Washington himself; and he was often called on by Washington, as in this case, for advice and assistance, and all the more confidently, perhaps, because he was an able lawyer, had been a prosecuting attorney and possessed a thorough knowledge of men. As will be seen further on, the matters submitted to him were frequently of the most difficult, delicate and confidential character.

The following instructions to Major John Clark, Jr., which tell their own story, were drafted (Nov. 4, 1777) by Washington himself for the express purpose of misleading and deceiving the enemy:—

In your next letter (for the British camp), I would have you mention that General Gates, now having nothing to do at the Northward, is sending down a very handsome reinforcement of Continental troops to this army, whilst he, with the remainder of them and all the New England and New York militia, is to make an immediate descent on New York, the reduction of which is confidently spoken of, (as it is generally supposed that a large part of Sir Henry Clinton's troops are detached to the assistance of General Howe) and that General Dickinson is at the same time to attack Staten Island, for which purpose he is assembling great numbers of the Jersey militia; that the received opinion in our camp is, that we will immediately attack Philadelphia on the arrival of the troops from the Northward; that I have prevailed upon the Legislative Body to order out two-thirds of the militia of this State for that purpose; that you have heard great talk of the Virginia and Maryland militia coming up, and in short that the whole Continent seems determined to use every exertion to put an end to the war this winter;

that we mention the forts as being perfectly secure, having sent ample reinforcements to their support.

In the summer of 1777, John and Baker Hendricks and John Meeker (perhaps the same Meeker from whose house in Springfield Parsons wrote his letter of December 16th to Washington), had been employed by Colonel Dayton to procure intelligence from the enemy. They were allowed to convey small quantities of provisions into New York and bring back a few goods, the better to cover their real designs. Being arrested on a charge of carrying on an illegal correspondence with the enemy, Washington interposed and explained the matter to Governor Livingston:—

"You must be well convinced," he wrote January 20, 1778, "that it is indispensably necessary to make use of these means to procure intelligence. The persons employed must bear the suspicion of being thought inimical, and it is not in their power to assert their innocence, because that would get abroad and destroy the confidence which the enemy puts in them."

In the spring of 1779, a spy employed by General Maxwell had brought in from the enemy the following series of questions to which he was to obtain answers:—

1. Where is Mr. Washington and what number of men has he with him?
2. What number of cannon has Mr. Washington with him and what general officers?
3. Whether there is to be a draft of the militia to join Mr. Washington, and how the inhabitants like it?
4. Whether there is any discontent among the soldiers?
5. Whether the inhabitants would resort to the King's standard provided a Post was taken in New Jersey and Civil Government established?
6. Your account of the situation of the army with every other matter you can collect.

The answers to these questions Washington drew up as though written by a very ignorant person, mixing up fact and falsehood, and transmitted them to General Maxwell with the following letter:—

HEADQUARTERS, MIDDLEBROOK, *May 6, 1779.*

"I enclose you answers to the questions, which you will put into the hands of the spy. He may be instructed to say that he sent the questions to a friend of his near the camp and received from him the answers. This occurs to me as the most eligible plan. However, you will judge yourself on the occasion. I think you had better have them copied in an indifferent hand, preserving the bad spelling at the same time.

The following are the answers:—

1. Can't tell the number exactly. Some says eight thosand and very knowing hands ten thosands. I dont think he has 8000 with himself besides the Jersey Brigade and another brigade which I hear is at Paramus. Gen. Washington keeps headquarters at Mrs. Wallis's house four miles from Bandbrook.

2. There is about sixty cannon in the parks at Plukemin, and not more than 8 or 10 with his troops at Bandbrook Camp. The general officers is General Starling and Gen. Greene (Genl. Howe is at Philadelphia, I am told and coming on to camp) Genl. de Kalbee and Gen. Stubun, French Generals. Gen. Sullivan (General Gates I hear is ordered here) Genl. Woodford, Gen. Mulimburg, Smallwood, Gist and one Genl. Mc Intosh.

3. The militia all ready to come out when signals is fired, which is pleaced upon all places in Jersey. They seem very angry with the British and curse them for keeping on the war. Many of them brag that they wold take revenge if they could get but a good opportunity, and General Washington to back them.

4. I cant say theres much discontent among the sodgers tho their money is so bad. They get plenty of provisions, and have got better cloes now than ever they had. They are very well off only for hatts. They give them a good deal of rum and whiskey, and this I suppose helps with the lies their officers are always telling them to keep up their spirits.

five. The people talk much as they used to do—some seem to get tired of the war. But the rebels seem to have a great spite against our friends and want to get their estates. I have heard some of these say—they would be glad to see the Inglish again in Jersey; but I have heard some again say, that the Inglish come into the country a little while, and then leave it and get their friends into trouble and then they loose their estates. I dont know whether many would join.

Mr. Washington's army is in three parts, two of them General

Starling and Gen. Kables are upon the mountains over Bandbrook and General Sinclairs men on this side Vanwitken bridge on high ground. They all seem to be getting ready for something. The waggons at the artifishers are getting ready, and they are bringing in all the horses from the country—nobody knows certain what they are going to do. A friend who keeps always with them tells me he cannot tell (I must not tell you his name just now) he thinks something very grand if it could be known he thinks for he heard a servant of Lord Starlings say, that he heard Lord Starling tell another officer that he hoped they would have New York before long and said the New England militia were all coming to help them.

I would write you more but you have not given me time. remember me to our friends in York—and dont forget to bring what I wrote for when you were last out.

P—— L——

P. S. dont send your next letter by the same hand, for I have reason to be suspicious and would not send this by him. When he left he went strait to Washington's headquarters."

A letter to Major Tallmadge of the Light Dragoons, who, on account of his activity, vigilance and ability, was often stationed near the enemy's lines, gives us an insight into Washington's methods:—

NEW WINDSOR, *June 27, 1779.*

SIR.—Your letter of yesterday came safe to my hands, and by the dragoon who was the bearer of it. I send you ten guineas for C——r. (Culper, a spy who had been long employed in New York, and whose intelligence had been of great importance). His successor, whose name I have no desire to be informed of, provided his intelligence is good and seasonably transmitted, should endeavor to hit upon some certain mode of conveying his informations quickly, for it is of little avail to be told of things after they have become a matter of public notoriety and known to everybody. This new agent should communicate his signature, and the private marks by which genuine papers are to be distinguished from counterfeits. There is a man on York Island, living at or near the North River, by the name of George Higday, who, I am told, hath given signal proofs of his attachment to us, and at the same time stands well with the enemy. If, upon enquiry, this is found to be the case, (and much caution should be used in investigating the matter as well on his own account as on that of Higday) he will be a fit instrument to convey intelligence to me while I am on the west side of the North River, as he

is enterprising and connected with people in Bergen County who will assist in forming a chain to me, in any manner they shall agree upon. I do not know whom H—— employs; but from H—— I obtain intelligence; and his name and business should be kept profoundly secret, otherwise, we not only lose the benefits derived from it, but may subject him to some unhappy fate. . . . I wish you to use every method in your power, through H—— and others, to obtain information of the enemy's situation, and as far as is to be come at, their designs."

In another letter to Major Tallmadge, dated Morristown, February 5, 1780, Washington suggests how intelligence may be safely communicated by the use of a sympathetic ink and a re-agent to make the writing visible:—

"I send twenty guineas and two phials containing the stain and counterpart of the stain, for Culper Junior, which I wish you to get to him with as much safety and dispatch as the case will conveniently admit. . . . He should avoid making use of the stain on a blank sheet of paper, which is the usual way of its coming to me This circumstance alone is sufficient to raise suspicion. A much better way is, to write a letter in the Tory style, with some mixture of family matters, and between the lines and on the remaining part of the sheet, to communicate with the stain the intended intelligence."

The British resorted to similar expedients, but the large body of loyalists scattered through the country—practically a corps of spies—made it comparatively easy for them to obtain prompt and accurate information. All through the war, notwithstanding every effort at concealment, their knowledge of our affairs, both military and civil, was almost as intimate and thorough as our own.

On Christmas day, 1779, Sir Henry Clinton sailed for South Carolina with the main body of his army, leaving New York in command of the Hessian General, Knyphausen. The active operations of the campaign were thus transferred to the South, and very little was left to employ the Northern army during the winter and spring except to keep watch and ward against the enemy in New York. Clinton returned North the following June, having compelled the surrender of Charleston and appar-

ently reduced the State to subjection. His return was probably hastened by secret information of the preparation of a French fleet and land force to attack New York.

During the spring and summer of 1780, the term of the "three years men," enlisted in 1777, expired, and it became necessary to fill their places. General Parsons, having gone to Connecticut in January, writes to General Washington in regard to the matter, as follows:—

HARTFORD, *February 1. 1780.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The Assembly of this State were delayed by the severe weather near a fortnight, and, since they have convened, have not taken up the subject of recruiting the army. I have applied to the Governor as well as to the gentlemen of the Assembly on the subject, and am informed that neither your Excellency nor Congress have made any representations to this State for this purpose. I am induced to believe that the recruiting service might be forwarded successfully here in a few weeks if the State settles with the army for their past wages in a manner satisfactory to them, of which there appears to me a great probability, although the settlement is not completed.

Should it be your intention to have the quota of this State filled, I am convinced it will be necessary for your Excellency to make a requisition for this purpose to the Assembly, otherwise I believe no measures will be taken by Government for that purpose, or, if any are taken, they will prove ineffectual from a general belief of their being unnecessary. I am with the greatest esteem

Yr. Excellency's obt. servt.,

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

Parsons during his stay in Connecticut seems to have followed up the matter of recruiting, for under date of February 27th, Captain Walker writes to Colonel Samuel B. Webb:—

I heard General Parsons propose a plan, and such I believe he means to adopt in his brigade on his return to the army—that was, to send into this State a number of likely sergeants and some music under the care of some officers, and let them go from town to town, also among the State troops, and beat up recruits. You must be sensible that there are numbers of men now only waiting to know what is done for the army and what bounty is given, to encourage them to enlist.

While at his home at Redding, Connecticut, to which place he had moved his family in the winter of 1778-9, General Parsons wrote the following interesting letter to Governor George Clinton of New York, proposing a scheme for the settlement of Western New York by the officers and soldiers of the Connecticut Line at the close of the war:—

REDDING, *February 21, 1780.*

DEAR SIR.—I find a considerable portion of the officers of the Connecticut Line are desirous of forming settlements in the western part of the State of New York at the close of the war, and have desired me to inform myself whether they can expect any grants from the State for that purpose.

I am of the number who place their views in your State, and have supposed the State of New York can in no way be a greater gainer than by engaging a speedy settlement of their western frontier, as it would become a barrier to the interior settlements, appreciate the value of the settled part of the country, increase their commerce as the inhabitants are increased, and make a price for all ungranted lands between the exterior and interior settlements. If these should be the views of your State, I cannot conceive a mode promising a speedier completion of the views of the State than engaging as many soldiers by liberal grants at the close of the war as will completely make these settlements; and no way promises speedier success than securing the soldiers then to be disbanded. If such grants are made to the officers as will make it their interest to secure the soldiers to settle there rather than in another State, you are sensible their influence will be exerted for that purpose, and are also sensible of the effect their exertions will probably produce. I own I feel myself interested in this application as my hopes at the close of the war are formed on grants I hope I may be able to secure in New York. This is also the case of many other officers of our Line, and should we meet the encouragement we wish, I believe we shall be able to procure a great proportion, if not the greatest part of our soldiers, to become settlers in that region immediately on the close of the war.

If you can spare a moment from your public concerns, I shall beg to know your opinion on the subject in general, and whether I may particularly form any expectations from your State which may be worth my pursuit. Your friendship in the matter will add to the obligations already conferred upon, Dear Sir,

Yr. friend and humble servt.,

To Governor George Clinton. SAML. H. PARSONS.

To which Governor Clinton replied as follows:—

ALBANY, *March 2, 1780.*

DEAR SIR.—I am favored with your letter of the 21st ult. The Legislature of this State had at their last meeting a bill before them for opening a Land Office and making liberal grants to the gentlemen of the army. The expectation of the arrival of the French fleet and the necessary preparations for operating against New York, occasioned their rising sooner than was expected and prevented it passing into a law. Resolutions of Congress recommending to the several States to forbear for the present establishing Land Offices and the granting of unappropriated lands, have prevented them from resuming the business. The idea of your becoming a citizen of this State will give me pleasure, and, be assured, Sir, that as far as my influence will extend, proper encouragements will be given to induce yourself and the other gentlemen you mention, to carry their intent into execution.

I am, Sir, your most obed't servt.,

To Gen. S. H. Parsons. GEO. CLINTON.

This settlement scheme for some reason, was never carried into effect. It would have been an advantageous arrangement for the State, but it does not appear that anything further was done about the matter.

Arnold seems at an earlier date to have entertained a similar project. On the 3d of February, 1779, Mr. Jay and the other delegates in Congress from New York, wrote as follows to Governor Clinton:—

Major General Arnold has in contemplation to establish a settlement of officers and soldiers who have served with him in the present war, and to lay the necessary foundation without loss of time. From a desire to become a citizen of New York, he gives our State the preference, and now visits your Excellency to make the necessary inquiries, it being out of our power to give him any information. The necessity of strengthening our frontiers is as obvious as the policy of drawing the attention of the people to that quarter in season. Virginia, we learn, has taken the lead and already passed laws for laying out a district of country for settlement, and assigning farms for their own soldiers, as well as those of Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey. A strong predilection, however, prevails in favor of our State on account of its situation for trade, the acknowl-

edged excellency of its Constitution and the steady and vigorous exertions of its government. Nothing, we are persuaded, will be wanting for its rapid settlement and cultivation but a wise and liberal system for the distribution of the public lands.

To you, Sir, or to our State, General Arnold can require no recommendation. A series of distinguished services entitles him to respect and favor.

April 6, Parsons wrote from Redding regarding the troops, and again, as follows, in reply to Washington's letter of the 12th, asking him to return to camp:—

REDDING, *April 25, 1780.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I was honored with your Excellency's letter of the 12th inst., in which I am desired to join the army as soon as I can make it convenient, in consequence of which I intended to have joined my brigade next week; but at present I am unable to undertake a journey, being troubled with disorders which prevent my riding any considerable distance, but I hope within ten or fifteen days to be able to join.

My son has just come from New York from whence he escaped the 18th inst.; he says a vessel arrived there the 14th in eleven days from Savannah, the Master of which informs that Charleston was not taken when he sailed. The report in the city was, that Sir Henry Clinton had so far advanced as to render the conquest of that place almost certain, but it is whispered that he had been repulsed in two assaults on the town with great loss.

The son of whom Parsons speaks, is his eldest, William Walter, named from his old friend and classmate, the Rev. Dr. William Walter, Rector of Trinity Church, Boston. "Midshipman Billy," as young Parsons was called, had not been with his father at Bunker Hill, in the camps at Redding and in the Highlands, a cadet in the Navy for a year or more, captured at Penobscott and imprisoned in New York, without having learned that eyes and ears are made to use, for very little happened in New York while he was a prisoner there, that he did not report to the General after his escape. From the letters which follow, it is plain that love for his enemies was not one of Billy's weaknesses, but that, on the contrary, there lurked in his bosom the very natural, though ungodly, feeling of revenge, and that the General was not wholly free from sympathy with Billy's senti-

ments. Parsons seems to have been disturbed lest his son, escaping as he did, had violated his parole, and wrote the following letter to Doctor Walter, whom he knew to be true to his early friendship, notwithstanding that he had been led by church affinities to side with the King:—

REDDING, *April 29, 1780.*

DEAR SIR.—Since my last to you I have seen General Silliman and am happy to hear from him that the representation my son made me of his escape, and the motives of it were just, and that neither he nor his friends were under any honorary engagements for his continuing a prisoner, that I suppose there will be no question on the subject of his coming out, as those facts undoubtedly give him the same right to escape as any other prisoner who never had been paroled.

Your message by General Silliman he delivered. In answer I can only say I have no desire to punish any man for a difference in political sentiments, but humanity sometimes requires the exercise of rigor and severity to compel the discharge of those duties to enemies which the laws of society seem to require. For these purposes I shall exercise that degree of rigor towards those who fall into my power as will effect the end designed and no greater. As to your Tory friends, the best advice I can give them is to keep out of my way; as to reforming them I have no expectation of it, and to punish them I have no desire to; but my conduct will be regulated by theirs. If they keep off from the main land, I shall not trouble them, but if they continue the practice of plundering, robbing and manstealing, I shall endeavor to possess myself of so many of them as will be necessary to produce by exemplary punishment the effect which reason, humanity and common honesty ought to produce without.

We have hitherto only followed the examples set us by Britons and their friends, and I shall soon be convinced whether the professions made on your side the water are sincere. I find your boatmen still follow the practice of manstealing, having taken an inhabitant last night from Stratford and plundered his house. If the practice is disavowed, Mr. Sherman will be sent home. Although my son's resentments are high against the class of men who solicited his confinement, I shall not consent to his inflicting punishment upon any which may fall in his power (which I think will probably not be a few) except the Hoyts, Capt. Camp, Nicol, Baker, Jarvis and a few other persons, whom if he happens to fall in with, I believe I shall

not feel myself disposed to prevent his taking full satisfaction of in any way he chooses.

I am &c.,

To Rev. William Walter. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The same day (Apr. 29th, 1780) Parsons writes to General Howe as follows:

DEAR GENERAL.—I have arrested Capt. Hoagland of the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons on the enclosed charges and beg you will appoint a court martial for his trial as speedily as it can be held, lest I should be delayed in joining my brigade, which I design shall not be longer than the 10th of May. . . .

My son fortunately made his escape from New York the 18th inst., where he had been a prisoner about a month. He brings me a particular state of the works in and about the city, the number of regiments in the city and the general state of their army, navy &c, in and about New York, which does not so materially differ from the number and condition before known to you as to need repetition; another embarkation was taking place which he says he heard Mr. Chamier (Genl. Burgoyne's Commissary) say was designed for Canada. In the course of his imprisonment, though he received many civilities from some gentlemen there and from the British officers in the city yet the Refugees had address and influence enough to procure an order for his close confinement and other rigorous treatment which I think is not to be suffered from the hands of any man. Those persons who were immediately instrumental in procuring those orders will probably soon be on the coast of Long Island where they may be taken. I should be particularly obliged to you to give him an order to take the command of the small guard at Stamford and Horseneck when the boats are not wanted for the purpose of procuring intelligence, and to make incursions on to the Island for the sole purpose of taking off their small guards and seizing the persons of those refugees if they fall in his power. I should also esteem it a particular favor if you would enclose me an order to Mr. Sutton to send a boat to Hempstead Harbor and bring off my son's trunk of clothing which he left in the city and which was to be forwarded to that place.

I am &c.,

To General Howe. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Whether Billy succeeded in capturing any of his friends (the refugees who procured his confinement in New York), and mak-

ing it pleasant for them, does not appear, but the following letter from his father to Thomas Mumford, dated June 9, 1780, finds him on his way to New London to ship as a volunteer:—

DEAR SIR.—This will be handed to you by my son who has gone down to New London in expectation of going with Capt. Hinman. If Lt. Mumford obtains his discharge, I cannot expect the office in the ship you encouraged me he should receive if your nephew did not go; if that should be the case and no place offers in the Hancock, I wish him to go as a volunteer with Capt. Hinman or Capt. Richards, with such shares as you think fit to allow him. I cannot be contented to join the army and leave him at his age of life in a state of idleness which in all circumstances is the road to ruin. Your son was through town and was importuned to lodge with us, but was not kind enough to call. I shall tell him when I have opportunity. I think he did not treat me kindly. Charleston seems to be rescued from M. Rivington's capitulation and I hope will continue a monument of Sir Harry's disgrace. I hope to join the army next Monday and soon to have the pleasure of seeing the French fleet and ourselves in possession of New York. I am, dear Sir, with compliments to your lady and family,

Your obliged and humble servt.,

To Thomas Mumford. SAML. H. PARSONS.

June 10, 1780.

P. S.—I have just received yours of the 7th—am happy to hear the success of the Hancock and hope on the arrival of the fleet your fears will be dissipated. The Committee for settling accounts have reported and found balances due to us which are satisfactory. This report is accepted. The ways and means for discharging the debt were not reported when I left Hartford. A private who had served three years without a family has fifty pounds, twelve shilling and two pence to receive and so in proportion. My son will go in the Deane or Hancock as you can best provide for him.

Yours &c.,

SAM H. PARSONS.

Charleston is taken, the articles of capitulation I have. The enemy are in Jersey.

A year later, in a letter from Lieutenant Hezekiah Rogers to General Parsons, dated Fairfield, June 13, 1781, we get further news of Billy and his doings; and in one from the General's

sister, dated Boston, October 1, 1781, intelligence of his arrival home:—

DEAR GENERAL.—I have the pleasure to inform you that this day I received particular and authentic intelligence of your son Billy. Judging that you had not heard from him, I embrace the earliest opportunity of transmitting to you the agreeable news. Capt. Miles of Milford informs me that he left St. Croix on the 4th of April, at which place he saw your son in good health. He made his escape from St. Eustatia. Having permission from Sir Bridges Rodney, by whom he was treated with politeness, to go on shore at St. Eustatia to get some clothes, a favorable opportunity presented of stepping on board a vessel bound to St. Thomas. The moment he expected to be remanded back to confinement, he readily embraced the only chance and happily effected his escape. From St. Thomas he took passage for the Island from whence Capt. Miles took his departure. He was treated with great inhumanity previous to his falling under the direction of Admiral Rodney, and was loaded with chains for seventy-two days. This severity was, however, I suppose, occasioned by his exertions and attempts to make his escape. He informed Capt. Miles that his then determinations were to go to Guadaloupe and get on board some armed vessel that he might have it in his power to retaliate for lost property and abusive treatment.

BOSTON, *October 1, 1781*

MY DEAR BROTHER.—I have now the pleasure to inform you that Billy has got here safe and seems in some measure satisfied with the seas. I wish him to settle down in some other business and leave the seas entirely. He intends to go from here to Hartford by water, but Mr. Benedict has talked with him and can perhaps inform you about his intentions better than I can.

Yours &c.,

PHEBE LANE.

To General Parsons.

The following is from General Parsons to the British Commissary General of Prisoners in New York:—

April 30, 1780.

DEAR SIR.—A certain Mr. Booth, a refugee from this State, (Connecticut) is now a prisoner with me taken by one of my guard boats near Long Island. By the laws of this country he must suffer capital punishment if he is delivered to the civil authority. His father

is a persevering Tory for whom I have no great respect, but he has preserved a consistency of conduct from the commencement of this contest, and (his political creed apart) is a gentleman of good character and estate. As I am not convinced these people answer the best purpose by being put to death, I have agreed to hold Booth in my guard until the return of this flag sent by his father, when if you will send me Mr. Wasson or James Du Blane of the Ship Recovery and now confined in the Prison Ship, I will immediately order Booth within the enemy's Lines, otherwise I must deliver him to the civil magistrate. I wish to receive your answer by this flag, and also a more particular account of your friend, Mr. Morris, that my application for his discharge may not be mistaken. I shall use my influence with General Lincoln and my other friends for his release, and hope to be able to accomplish it.

I am with sentiments of esteem and respect,
Yr. obedt. servt.
SAML. H. PARSONS.

To Mr. Sproat, C. G. N. P., New York.

The investment in government securities which General Parsons made of his property, instead of relieving him, as he expected, from all care of his private affairs, proved a source of endless trouble and anxiety. As the currency depreciated, he saw all kinds of indebtedness falling, and every kind of property rising, in value. He found himself, who had trusted his all to the Government when he entered the army, growing poor, while his friends who had remained in civil life, kept their property and engaged in trade, were growing rich. If Congress were certain to pay the face value of its obligations, he could wait; but should it repudiate them, as its recent action led him to fear, his family must be reduced to penury. To save them was his first duty, and he must act quickly in order to preserve the remnant of his fortune. Under these circumstances, he again writes, May 30, 1780, to President Jay and encloses his resignation. He states that his letter of August 6, 1779, in which he explained to Congress his peculiar situation, was referred to the Board of Treasury, but had not been answered; that the assurances given soon after by Congress that the States were able to pay their bills of credit in full and would do so at some future period, had satisfied him, believing that he could have no higher assurance than the faith of the

government plighted a second time. He then speaks of his disappointment at finding by the resolution of Congress of March last, that instead of receiving his bills in full, he is to expect only one-fortieth part, and of its injurious effect upon himself.

"I do not mean, Sir," he says, "by enumerating these things to arraign the measures of Congress or to draw in question the justice of their last resolution. However public necessity may have rendered it proper, the hardship I suffer in consequence is not alleviated by this consideration. I only intend by this to show the propriety of my present request. This resolution has ruined me; at more than forty years of age I am left with a numerous dependent family to the benevolence of an ungrateful world. I think I may without offense say, I am a very undeserved victim to the necessity of the public and have no possible way left me to hope for a support for my family but to pay an immediate attention to securing the scattered remains of my little fortune. I have therefore to beg of Congress to accept my resignation of the office of Brigadier General in the army which I have held from the 9th of August, 1776, and I beg you to assure that Honorable Body that I retain a just sense of the honor they have done me in this appointment and feel myself heartily disposed to forward as far as my feeble efforts will be serviceable, every measure for the preservation of the rights of my country against the power of Great Britain; but the duties I owe my family under my circumstances forbid my continuing longer in the field. Should it be consistent with the policy of Congress to suffer me to hold my present rank without pay or subsistence to enable me to take any occasional command, I should be particularly obliged by it, but I would not wish in this to be gratified if it will in any measure interfere with the general regulations meant to be pursued by the army."

The resolution of Congress of March last to which Parsons refers, provided for the issue of the enormous sum for that time of two hundred millions of dollars, the effect of which was that forty paper dollars became worth only one in specie, and the holders of government securities, should they be paid in paper, would receive one-fortieth part of the debt due them. The only reply Congress seems to have made to his request, was to promote him the following October to the position of Major General. His services were too valuable to permit of his resignation.

An unpublished letter from General Parsons to his wife, dated, Groton, February 24, 1779, written while he was in command at New London and expecting an attack at any time from the enemy on Long Island, furnishes accurate information as to the value of his estate at this time.

"As the time draws near" he writes, "when I expect the arrival of such a force as will enable me to attack the enemy, I will improve this leisure to give you as particular a statement of my affairs as I am able, that you may collect together our little for the use of the family in case of misfortune. After giving Billy something, perhaps the value of five hundred dollars, the property must be equally divided between him and the other children, but the whole is to be improved for the support and education of the children and your own support as long as it is wanted for that purpose."

The statement which he makes of his affairs, shows:—cash and certificates, $20,000; debts, wages due, lands, plate, etc., $5770, making a total of $25,770. Against this he shows an indebtedness of $13,570, leaving his net assets, $12,200. In a previous letter he speaks of leaving a profession in 1775 worth $2000, for a Colonelcy worth $600, and of having received at no time since he has been in the army over two-thirds that sum. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that he was anxious for the future of his family. If anyone thinks Parsons unreasonable in his complaints to Congress, let him listen to what Washington says in a letter to Joseph Jones in Congress, dated August 13, 1780:—

It does not require with you, I am sure, at this time of day, arguments to prove that there is no set of men in the United States, considered as a body, that have made the same sacrifices of their interests in support of the common cause, as the officers of the American Army; that nothing but a love of their country, of honor, and a desire of seeing their labors crowned with success, could possibly induce them to continue one moment in service; that no officer can live upon his pay; that hundreds, having spent their little all in addition to their scanty public allowance, have resigned because they could no longer support themselves as officers; that numbers are at this moment rendered unfit for duty for want of clothing, while the rest are wasting their property, and some of them verging fast to the gulf of poverty and distress.

In closing his letter to his wife, Parsons says:—

"I am in good health and experience every mark of politeness and respect from Mr. Mumford's family and the gentlemen here. If Billy is desirous of coming here, I have no objections if you can spare him, but don't let a word transpire to him or anyone of the cause. My love to him, Lucia and all our little flock and compliments to my officers."

The outcome of Billy's visit to New London was, that he enlisted on the "Warren," became a midshipman in the new American Navy, and entered upon the plucky career of which we have had glimpses in the preceding pages.

Springfield, June 20, 1780, Washington wrote to the Committee Co-operation:—

I have thought proper to send Brigadier General Parsons to the State of Connecticut. My orders to him will relate to collecting, arranging and forwarding drafts and recruits to the army.

On the 24th, General Parsons wrote General Washington that he did not call at West Point because it was important to be with the Assembly. He speaks hopefully of the prospect of getting troops and says he will go to the eastern part of the State and be in Danbury within a week. The same day he wrote to a Committee of Congress, as follows:—

HARTFORD, *June* 24, 1780.

GENTLEMEN.—On my arrival at this place I waited on the Governor and Council and find the Assembly have ordered fifteen hundred men for the Continental Army to be drafted the first of July, unless sooner engaged, to serve to the first of January, and apportioned the number to be raised to the several towns; they have also ordered twenty-five hundred militia to be raised by the 15th of July, to serve three months, and also ordered from them two State Regiments, supposed to consist of one thousand men, to join the Army. . . . By letters of the second of June and one subsequent on this head, I have strongly remonstrated to the Council and endeavored to convince them of the necessity of filling the Army, and have the pleasure to inform you I have good prospects of effecting an alteration so far as to add one thousand to the number voted for

the Continental Army. The Council are to convene next Thursday on this subject and the gentlemen now present have assured me of their influences to effect the proposed alteration. As I pass through the towns of the State, I have endeavored to convince every person of influence I have seen of the absolute necessity of furnishing their men and supplies without the least delay, and I think from the present appearances there is very great reason to expect most of the men will be provided in season. The supplies required are ordered, and I believe will be furnished as the circumstances of the State will admit. I shall go to-morrow on to the eastern part of the State, and hope to be able to give you as flattering prospects from thence as I can from those parts of the State through which I have already passed.

July 5, 1780, General Parsons writes by his Aid-de-Camp, Mr. Lawrence to General Howe then in command near the Sound, requesting a flag that he may interest Governor Franklin in obtaining a release of his nephew whose vessel had been captured by an Algerine Corsair:—

Sir.—The bearer, Mr. Lawrence, will apply to you for a flag on a subject interesting to my friends, which I must beg you to favor me with. My brother's son sailed on a Privateer, called "Civil Usage," from Newburyport in June, 1778, which has been supposed to be lost until a few weeks since. He has received a letter from a gentleman in Liverpool informing him that an American Privateer of that description was taken near the Strait's mouth in the summer of that year by an Algerine Corsair, and that the men are now prisoners in Algiers. He has given me a letter to a friend of his in Gibralter, which I wish to convey to New York and also to interest Mr. Franklin to redeem my nephew. Under these circumstances I desire you will be kind enough to send me a flag. I will insert the name of the person I shall procure to go. I am uncertain who will go down. I wish to procure a man who will see Mr. Franklin; as 'tis a matter of so much concern, I am unwilling to trust my letter to the ordinary mode of delivering to the Commanding Officer without some special attention to the subject.

A Mr. Williams, a midshipman, deserted from the Pacific, whom I have sent to you. His motives for deserting he will be able to explain. He is known to sundry gentlemen of my acquaintance on whose fidelity I can rely. They give him a good character. A letter sent me on the subject I enclose.

Mr. Lawrence will attend the trial of Baldwin, confined for driving cattle to the enemy. I hope you will be pleased to order his trial at as early an hour as can be done with convenience, that Mr. Lawrence may return. The enemy were the night before last at the Quaker Meeting House in considerable force. I have not since heard of them. If anything of importance has occurred, I will thank you for a line, if you can find leisure. I hope to be able to forward one thousand recruits within four or five days.

I am, Dr. Sir, &c.,

To General Howe. SAML. H. PARSONS.

July 4, Parsons writes General Washington from Danbury that he has been through most of the eastern towns of the State, and believes the troops will be forwarded as required. And again, on the 10th, acknowledging Washington's letter of the 29th of June, states that he has ordered the drafts from the troops of horse to join Sheldon's regiment, with the understanding that they are to act as infantry unless the service requires more mounted men, which will be satisfactory to them if the dismounted dragoons are ordered to the same kind of service. He writes that he has made these concessions

to avoid checking that spirit which has appeared for the preservation of our country at this time, and so large a body as two thousand men from various parts of the State to become disgusted at once, would have been very detrimental to us, and the constitution of the Cavalry in this State exempts them from doing duty as Infantry. Some unexpected delays have prevented the arrival of the recruits as soon as I expected, and I have sent on but two hundred, but from the information I have been able to procure, the greater part of the first draft of fifteen hundred are now on their march to this place, and I hope by the last of this week will be in.

In May, 1780, the number of Continental troops north of Virginia did not exceed seven thousand; and in the first week in June, those under Washington's immediate command, present and fit for duty, numbered only thirty-seven hundred and sixty. This, certainly, was not a promising condition of affairs. To fill the ranks by voluntary enlistment had been found impossible. The zeal and activity which marked the beginning of the conflict, had, to an alarming degree, given place to apathy and

indifference; even the French alliance was insufficient to arouse the people. A draft from the militia had plainly become the only means of recruiting the army. Since Parsons came into the State, his time had been fully occupied in urging prompt action on the part of the Assembly and the towns. His efforts, as we have seen, had been attended with considerable success. The new levies, raised to serve until the following January, were now rapidly coming in, and the quota of Connecticut promised to be filled before the opening of the campaign.

CHAPTER XX

THE SUMMER OF 1780. ARRIVAL OF TERNAY AND ROCHAMBEAU. ARNOLD IN COMMAND AT WEST POINT. HIS TREASON. HERON DELIVERS TO PARSONS ARNOLD'S LETTER TO ANDRE. PARSONS' ILL HEALTH.

July—October, 1780

ON the tenth of July, 1780, a powerful French fleet under Admiral Ternay arrived in Newport Harbor, having on board some six thousand troops under the command of Count de Rochambeau. The expedition had been secretly fitted out at the instance of Lafayette, and nothing was known of it by the Americans until his return in May. On the 17th, Lafayette left Headquarters with full authority to arrange plans with the French Commanders for future operations. In his progress to Newport, he called upon Governor Trumbull, General Parsons, Mr. Wadsworth, the Commissary General, and other persons in Connecticut, and used his personal efforts to engage them to raise and hasten forward their quota of troops and get together such supplies of arms and ammunition as could be spared from that State.

The following letter from General Parsons to General Washington gives an account of Lafayette's visit:—

DANBURY, *July 21, 1780.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The Marquis Lafayette called upon me this morning on his route eastward, and in conversation with him on the subject of procuring arms, ammunition and other supplies, he thought it advisable to require three or four thousand stands of arms to be collected in this State, lest there should be a deficiency in the public stores to arm all our Lines, and also to request the Governor and Council to furnish all the powder to be found in the State. I gave it as my opinion to the Marquis that as many as three thousand stands of arms could be taken from the militia without affecting those who are drafted to complete the number required of this State.

At the same time it will be attended with inconvenience which no person would choose to be subjected to and which necessity only would induce your Excellency to direct. From the best accounts I am able to collect, I am inclined to believe we shall have near two thousand troops in the field on the tenth of August, exclusive of the militia. I hoped before this time to have had more than twelve hundred, but many to me unexpected delays have happened that the levies yet sent do not amount to one thousand, but they are daily coming in and I believe those which have arrived to-day will make up one thousand in the whole.

More than two thousand have arrived from Massachusetts Bay and I am induced to believe that the four New England States will have added six thousand levies to the Continental Battalions by the tenth of next month. If the inhabitants of the State were certain that New York would become the object of attack this campaign, I think we could have as many men as would be requested of the State. A number of gentlemen have proffered bringing volunteer companies into the field who would subject themselves to the government of the army and engage in continued service until the city should be taken or the siege raised, unless sooner dismissed. I wish to know your Excellency's opinion of my encouraging this sort of volunteering.

The Marquis desires your Excellency to inform me whether the arms he proposes to request of the Governor should be collected, or whether our public stores will afford a sufficiency without them. I believe I shall be obliged to make the tour of the State once more before the recruits are all collected. I find they want to be often reminded of their duty. Nothing on my part shall be neglected to forward the levies as expeditiously as possible.

I am with the greatest respect,

Yr. Excellency's obt. Servt.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 27th, Parsons reports from Redding that "a large fleet is gathering at Huntington and troops are being collected for embarkation." These were the transports intended to convey Sir Henry Clinton's troops to Newport. When on the 18th of July Clinton heard of the arrival of the French fleet, he determined to attack without delay; but the transports did not arrive until the 27th, when it was too late for a *coup de main;* never theless he embarked, but hearing that the French were fortifying Newport and the militia assembling, and finding that Washing-

ton was rapidly advancing towards New York with the intention of attacking the moment he sailed, he abandoned the expedition and crossing the Sound to Huntington Bay, on the 31st disembarked his troops.

Clinton having apparently relinquished his designs against the French, Washington early in August recrossed the Hudson with his whole force and moved down into Bergen County, New Jersey, with the intention of attacking the upper part of New York Island should the opportunity present itself. In this movement, the Connecticut Division was assigned the right of the second line. In September, the army fell back towards Tappan, in Rockland County, New York. At this place Parsons joined his Division the 17th or 18th of the month, upon his return from Connecticut, where he had been sent by Washington in June to "collect, arrange and forward drafts and recruits for the army." During Washington's absence at Hartford to confer with Ternay and Rochambeau, General Greene was left in command at Tappan, and he was still in command when the news of Arnold's treason and flight was received.

August 2, General Parsons wrote from his camp at Danbury, a long and important letter to Washington, giving the disposition of the troops and recruits, and adds that the General Assembly would undoubtedly at its next session furnish additional men. He also reports valuable information received with regard to the movements of the enemy on Long Island, the condition of the troops and the places where the transports were taking provisions.

On the 8th Parsons writes to Colonel Alexander Hamilton, then acting as Aid-de-Camp to General Washington, acknowledging his letter of July 1, asking him to appoint his friend, Lieut. William Colefax of Washington's Life Guard on his staff, and says that he should be happy to oblige him, but Congress had made no provision for an aid to a Brigadier, and it is only by courtesy that he has one; and that Mr. Lawrence, of the artillery, has served for the last year and expects to continue in his family. He then comments in a sarcastic way upon the conduct of Congress, which

after having removed every inducement to their service from

pecuniary motives, seem to be alarmed lest some of us may be too much attached to their interest, and have for a course of years taken from us those motives from which honor and ambition would prompt us to continue the toils of a military life. Other nations have considered promotions as one of the modes of attaching persons to their service, but lest a doubt should remain whether the officers of our Army were influenced by any other motives than pure disinterested patriotism, they have removed all hope of preferment so that we now serve without pay, subsistence or hope of preferment or reward. I last year commanded the Connecticut Division and shall continue this campaign to serve in my present rank with the same command as the last, in the sure and certain expectation of saving the Continent about forty Continental dollars a month which they would be subjected to if, like other nations, they gave a rank equal to the command, but since Congress (if not the country) are objects of charity or at least afford great room for the exercise of that grace, I shall acquiesce until this campaign closes.

In this opinion of Congress, Parsons had the hearty sympathy of Hamilton and every other officer in the army.

Washington having, in reply to Parsons' letter of July 21, given it as his opinion that the enlistment of volunteer companies should be encouraged, and requested him to accept the offer of such when made, General Parsons wrote to Governor Trumbull, Danbury, August 9, 1780, that he had received the General's request that volunteer companies should be formed to assist him in his operations against New York, not to be called out for any other service; and that these companies be officered as other troops are, viz:—a captain, lieutenant and ensign to every fifty-six rank and file; that he has no doubt of the hearty co-operation of his Excellency and the Council, and that, "if the measure succeeds, it will prove a substitute for the very great deficiency of twenty-five hundred men ordered to join the Continental Army." He suggests "that the Governor's guards at Hartford and New Haven, and the independent companies in Norwich, Middletown, Wallingford, Pomfret and other parts of the State, be ordered to hold themselves in readiness to assist in these operations and that they be at liberty to enlist into their companies any number of men for this particular service." He finds fault with the remissness of the Council in communicating the orders in respect to forwarding the levies, and encloses

returns showing the backward condition of the recruiting service. "The Newtown Tories," he adds, "have lately been very insolent, destroyed the grain, fences and orchards of some of the Whigs, and fired into the house of a Mr. Baldwin in the night, one of the balls lodging in his bed. Some of them are joined by deserters and are said to be concealed in a part of that town which I shall endeavor to search thoroughly to-morrow, and will acquaint you with the issue." Parsons had written a few days before to Rev. Mr. Trumbull of North Haven, asking him to use his influence in raising a company to serve during the siege of New York, and expresses the hope "that the spirit of our countrymen will be manifested in a cheerful readiness to enter into this engagement, that the heart of our General may be cheered and the enemies of our country convinced that their secret machinations are as fruitless as open force, to compel a submission to that power which has sought our destruction in ways which would make a savage blush."

August 10, General Parsons writes from Redding to General Howe, requesting a flag for Captain Benedict to go to New York. On the 14th, he writes from Redding to Colonel Eliphalet Lockwood, taking him to task for intimating in a letter to the Council that certain boats under the control of himself and General Howe, have been engaged in illicit trade, and that their transactions are so secret that no man can find them out, and then goes on to say:—

I wish every man who betrays a public trust was punished, but (to use your expression), where a matter is so secretly conducted that it cannot be found out or detected, it is a mystery to me to know how you came to a knowledge of the facts. I am morally certain that a trade is carried on with Long Island, and that from no Post in the State in so great a degree as within the limits of your command, and have reason to believe it is under the countenance and with the approbation of some men who would wish to be thought endeavoring to break up the practice. I know the boats employed at your Post are generally suspected, and by your mode of reasoning, are guilty. The persons who have procured commissions from the Governor by the influence and recommendation of gentlemen in authority belonging to Norwalk, are said to have ever been inimical to our cause, and there are full proofs that when they were made

prisoners, they were discharged on bringing full evidence that they were Tories and in their sphere had aided Crown measures. . . . I am willing every suspected boat should be stopped, which would, I believe, stop every boat and annihilate every guard on the Coast, for I believe firmly there's not a guard on the Coast but is taxed with being concerned in the trade. I don't know with what truth. I wish you in future to be a little more certain before you use my name on these occasions, which will prevent the necessity of retracting. I am very sensible many gentlemen would wish the facts you mentioned were true as to me, and many others would wish to create suspicions of the conduct of other people to serve as a screen to their own transgressions. As to you personally, I don't remember to have heard you carried on this trade, but your guard is as publicly accused as any people in the State.

In the arrangement of the army published in general orders, August 1, the command of the left wing was assigned to Major General Arnold. When it was found that he was disappointed and dissatisfied, and complaining that his wound would not allow him to act in the field, Washington issued the following order complying with his request to be stationed at West Point:—

PEEKSKILL, *August 3, 1780.*

SIR.—You are to proceed to West Point and take the command of that Post and its dependencies, in which all are included from Fishkill to King's Ferry. The Corps of infantry and cavalry advanced towards the enemy's lines on the east side of the River, will also be under your orders and will take directions from you; and you will endeavor to obtain every intelligence of the enemy's motions. The garrison of West Point is to consist of the militia of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. . . . You will endeavor to have the Works at West Point carried on as expeditiously as possible under the direction and superintendence of the Engineers.

I am &c.,

To General Arnold.

This order brought General Parsons for the first time within Arnold's military jurisdiction. At the moment, however, he was on special duty in Connecticut by order of General Washington.

On the 15th, Parsons wrote Arnold from Danbury requesting that Colonel Canfield's regiment be ordered to Horseneck to

take the place of that of Colonel Welles, whose term of service had expired. On the 20th, he writes Washington respecting the disposition of the Connecticut troops and the willingness of the Assembly to furnish additional men. On the 25th he writes Arnold that one Walter, a seaman, can obtain valuable information with regard to the enemy in New York and is trustworthy. He asks for orders to procure a boat and form a regular course of intelligence by way of Long Island to New York, by which he may get weekly news. Walter will undertake this for "some certain pay in Continental money." The next day he reports with regard to Thomas Osborne who had been condemned by court-martial as a spy and advises that he be held a prisoner at West Point until the statements he has made inculpating many persons more guilty and more important than himself be investigated. On the 28th he again writes Arnold respecting a writ of prohibition which had been issued to forbid action by the court-martial in the case of Thomas Osborne, and states that the action of the court was sustained.

September 2, 1780, Washington writes to Arnold from his Headquarters in Bergen County, "that the enemy are preparing for some important movement either against the main army or the Posts in the Highlands, and desires him to take every precaution and put the Posts in the best state of defense; and that orders are already given for the two State regiments of Connecticut to form a junction with Colonel Sheldon." These two regiments had been stationed at Danbury and on the Sound under the command of General Parsons.

Danbury, September 4, Parsons writes General Washington that at present very few recruits can be added to the army, and requests permission to join his brigade. He asks that the conduct of Captain Sill of Colonel Warner's regiment be inquired into, and promises to have his troops near New Castle day after to-morrow. "Just as I was closing this letter," he says, "I received your Excellency's letter of the second instant, and shall join the troops near New Castle the day after to-morrow and pursue the directions your Excellency has given therein."

September 5, General Parsons writes to General Arnold:—

DEAR GENERAL.—Yours of the 27th and 31st instant I duly re-

ceived with the resolution of Roger Sherman and his associates enclosed.

I remember the Act of Congress you refer to enabling a general officer commanding on a separate, to approve sentences of Courts Martial, but, if I mistake not, this act is repealed. But I by no means consider myself under the description of these resolutions, being in the State of Connecticut for a special purpose only, and subject to your control as commanding east of the Hudson River; however, as I believe it best Mr. Osborne should live some months, I have not returned the proceedings of the Court Martial in expectation I shall see you soon. Some good has resulted from his imprisonment (eight of the inhabitants of New Haven being sent to Simsbury Mines and a number more being candidates) and I expect more will arrive by detaining him.

I have just received his Excellency's orders to take command of the troops at New Castle and near the Lines, subject to your orders, and shall proceed to that place to-morrow if my health will permit, being now much unwell.

The resolutions of Congress you were so kind to transmit me, I have carefully examined. I think I have made great demonstration of patience and self-denial and sacrificed my time in giving it two or three readings before I stamped it in the earth. Some degree of invention must have been allowed them to have devised measures so much to insult those who for years they abused in an unexampled manner. The cause of my country I will never forsake; 'tis a just and glorious cause. The virtues of our General will ever attach us to his fortunes. But the wretches who have crept into Congress are almost below contempt. Our country will never prosper in their hands. They will starve us in the midst of plenty. To deny us very obvious justice and to insult us when we require it, is left only for politicians of the new world. My hand shall be added to any representation my brethren agree to make. I think the insult should not be passed over in silence.

This language concerning Congress was fully justified by its conduct. Rent by faction and intrigue, it was distrusted even by its friends. Its relations with the States were far from satisfactory and with the army were decidedly bad. No adequate provision was made by it for either the pay or supply of its troops. In August it threatened such an exercise of its power as drew from Washington the warning that if the deed were perpetrated, he questioned much "if there was an officer in the

whole line that would hold a commission beyond the end of the campaign, if he did till then. Such an act, even in the most despotic governments, would be attended with loud complaints." The act threatened, to which Parsons refers in the foregoing letter, was the suspension of General Greene from his command in the line without proper trial. As to it Washington goes on to say:—"Can it be supposed that men under these circumstances, who can derive at best, if the contest ends happily, only the advantages which accrue in equal proportions to others, will sit patient under such a precedent? Surely they will not; for the measure, not the man, will be the subject of consideration, and each will ask himself this question: If Congress by its mere fiat, without inquiry and without trial, will suspend an officer to-day, and an officer of such high rank, may it not be my turn to-morrow, and ought I to put it in the power of any man or body of men to sport with my commission and character, and lay me under the necessity of tamely acquiescing, or, by an appeal to the public, exposing matters which must be injurious to its interests."

September 8th, Parsons writes that his son's return from a cruise necessitates his remaining a few days longer in the country.

On the 14th of September, Washington wrote to General Arnold:—"I shall be at Peekskill on Sunday evening on my way to Hartford to meet the French Admiral and General. You will be pleased to send down a guard of a captain and fifty men at that time, and direct the quartermaster to endeavor to have a night's forage for about forty horses. You will keep this to yourself, as I wish to make my journey a secret." This was Washington's last letter to Arnold.

On the 16th, the sloop of war, "Vulture," sailed up the Hudson and came to anchor within easy view of King's Ferry. On board was Beverly Robinson, whose mission was to aid the negotiations commenced in 1779 between Arnold and the British Adjutant General. The next day, while dining with several persons at his headquarters opposite West Point, once Robinson's beautiful country seat, a letter from Robinson was brought to Arnold, who, carelessly glancing it at, mentioned to his guests its contents, which were nominally to ask an interview.

Colonel Lamb, one of the guests, urged him to refuse the request, lest it should furnish occasion for suspecting improper communications with the enemy, and exacted a promise that he would first submit the letter to General Washington.

On the evening of the 18th, Arnold met Washington at King's Ferry, and, while crossing the river, showed him Robinson's letter. The "Vulture," which was in plain sight a short distance down the river, Washington examined through his glass. Suspecting nothing, he advised Arnold that, being Chief Commander of a Post, he could not with propriety grant Robinson's request for a personal interview. Arnold accompanied Washington as far as Peekskill, and the next morning they parted forever.

September 23, 1780, occurred the most startling and alarming event of the whole war, the discovery of Arnold's "villainous perfidy," as Washington truly characterized it, and the capture of the British Adjutant General, Major André. The consternation it occasioned cannot be described, and the feeling of doubt and uncertainty to which it gave rise was not quieted until the full extent of the conspiracy was known. Arnold intended to deal the cause of Independence a crushing blow, and would have done so had his plans not miscarried. Washington's intentions, as Clinton understood them, were to advance with his own army upon the lines at Kingsbridge, while the French threatened New York from Long Island. The plan of the conspirators was, that Arnold should surrender the forts and garrison at West Point the instant the siege commenced. This would have compelled Washington to retire, and the French, left unsupported, would probably have fallen an easy prey to the enemy. The consequences can easily be imagined.

Major André, after his capture, was taken to North Castle and handed over to Lieut. Colonel Jameson of Sheldon's Dragoons, who sent him under guard to Headquarters with a note to Arnold advising him of what had been done. Had he reached his destination, both he and Arnold would probably have escaped, but, as it happened, Major Tallmadge returning that day to North Castle, learned from Jameson the circumstances of André's arrest and coupling them with the contents of a letter to Colonel Sheldon from "John Anderson," written

on the 7th from New York, became convinced that Arnold was playing false and urged Jameson to recall his note and order André back to camp. The latter he consented to do, but deeming Arnold innocent, he let his note go forward. The result was, that the timely warning thus given enabled the traitor to escape to the "Vulture," and safety, while poor André was left to suffer in his stead. André was removed to West Point and thence to Tappan, where Washington convened a Board of General Officers to whom he issued the following order:—

HEADQUARTERS, TAPPAN, *September 29, 1780.*

GENTLEMEN.—Major André, Adjutant General to the British Army will be brought before you for your examination. He came within our Lines in the night on an interview with Major General Arnold, and in an assumed character; and was taken within our Lines, in a disguised habit, with a pass under a feigned name, and with the enclosed papers concealed upon him. After a careful examination, you will be pleased, as speedily as possible, to report a precise state of his case, together with your opinion of the light in which he ought to be considered and the punishment that ought to be inflicted. The Judge Advocate will attend to assist in the examination, who has sundry other papers relative to this matter, which he will lay before the Board. I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, Your most obedient and humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

The board consisted of Major Generals Greene, Lord Stirling, St. Clair, Lafayette, Steuben and Howe, and Brigadier Generals Parsons, James Clinton, Glover, Knox, Stark, Hand, Huntington and the Judge Advocate, John Lawrence, all men of the highest character. Upon André's frank and full confession, and after due deliberation, the court, although most anxious to save him, unanimously reported that "Major André, Adjutant General to the British Army, ought to be considered a spy from the enemy, and that agreeable to the law and usage of Nations, it is their opinion he ought to suffer death." The opinion of the court was approved by Washington on the 30th, and the time fixed for the execution was five o'clock in the afternoon of the next day. At the request of Sir Henry Clinton, however, who promised to present "a true state of facts," a short respite was granted, but the facts presented not proving

sufficient to alter the previous determination, the execution took place at noon of October second.

A singular circumstance happened in connection with Arnold's negotiation with Clinton, to which, so far as I know, attention has not yet been called. The matter is fully explained in the two following unpublished letters from General Parsons to General Washington, the one dated October 1, 1780 and the other undated, but probably written a few days after, to be found in Vol. 113 of Washington's Manuscripts, on file in the State Department, pages 53 and 50.

CAMP, *1st Octr., 1780.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I beg you to excuse my not waiting on you with the enclosed letter. I am so exceedingly unwell as to be unable to go from my quarters; if I should recover strength enough and the weather should clear off serene, I will ride down to-day. The enclosed letter is from General Arnold, the cover and seals as they came to me except their being broke. You may still see the inward seal has not been broken.

I am Dr. Sr. Yr. Obedt. Servt.,
SAM. H. PARSONS.

This letter is endorsed, "Octo'r. 1st, 1780, from Genl. Parsons enclosing an intercepted letter from Gustavus (Arnold) to Mr. Anderson, Merchant in New York, and addressed to "His Excellency General Washington, private."

"DEAR GENERAL.—About the 27th of August last, a neighbor of mine showed me a letter which he received from a friend of his in New York, informing him that he had received the money on a debt due to my informant from a person lately dead, and that if he could procure a flag and come to New York, he would pay it to him. He requested my assistance in procuring a flag for the purpose. I accordingly wrote to General Arnold in his behalf, informing him that I knew the person in question to be friendly to the Country and of such a character that he would faithfully perform whatever engagements he made. General Arnold, after detaining him until the 30th of August without giving him any reasons for his detention, granted him a flag, and then brought from his private room the letter addressed to John Anderson, which has since been delivered to your Excellency. He informed the bearer that it was a letter

from a friend of his which he had inspected, at the same time pointing that it had been sealed with a wafer which he had broke and afterwards sealed with wax. This he desired the bearer to be careful of and deliver with his own hand if he went into New York, or to the commanding officer of the outpost if he did not. The person to whom it was committed went into New York and effected his business; but the extraordinary precaution which Arnold had used respecting the letter excited his curiosity to examine the manner in which it was sealed, and finding the wafer had not been broken as Arnold had told him, he said he expected it might contain something illicit, and upon consulting some of his friends, there, concluded to bring it back again, and on the 10th of September brought it and delivered it to me. It should have been forwarded earlier to your Excellency, but as I supposed it to refer merely to Commerce, I chose rather to make it a subject of private conversation than of letter. On my arrival, your Excellency was just leaving camp, so that it was left to the ripening of the horrid event to detect this unsuspected instrument.

I am your Excellency's Obedt. Servt.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To his Excellency, General Washington.

The following is the letter from General Parsons to General Arnold above referred to:—

REDDING, *August 28, 1780.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The bearer, Wm. Heron, awaits upon you to request a flag for the purpose of securing a debt due him; the probability of effecting it he will convince you of. Mr. Heron is a neighbor of mine for whose integrity and firm attachment to the cause of the country I will hold myself answerable. If it will consist with the present circumstances of the army, I shall be much obliged to you to grant him the favor he requests. I am certain he will conduct with strict honor every matter he undertakes.

I am &c.,

To General Arnold. S. H. PARSONS.

Arnold's letter to "John Anderson," delivered by Heron to Parsons and enclosed by him to Washington, is as follows:—

August 30, 1780.

"SIR.—On the 24th inst. I received a note from you without date in answer to mine of the 7th of July, also a letter from your house

of the 24th of July, in answer to mine of the 15th, with a note from Mr. B———, of the 30th July; with an extract of a letter from Mr. J. Osborn of the 24th. I have paid particular attention to the contents of the several letters; had they arrived earlier, you should have had my answer sooner. A variety of circumstances has prevented my writing you before. I expect to do it very fully in a few days, and to procure you an interview with Mr. M———e, when you will be able to settle your commercial plan, I hope, agreeable to all parties. Mr. M———e assures me that he is still of opinion that his first proposal is by no means unreasonable, and makes no doubt, when he has had a conference with you, that you will close with it. He expects, when you meet, that you will be fully authorised from your house; that the risks and profits of the copartnership may be fully and clearly understood.

A speculation might at this time be easily made to some advantage with ready money; but there is not the quantity of goods at market which your partner seems to suppose, and the number of speculators below, I think, will be against your making an immediate purchase. I apprehend goods will be in greater plenty, and much cheaper, in the course of the season; both dry and wet are much wanted and in demand at this juncture; some quantities are expected in this part of the country soon. Mr. M———e flatters himself, that in the course of ten days he will have the pleasure of seeing you; he requests me to advise you, that he has ordered a draft on you in favor of our mutual friend S———y for 300 pounds which you will charge on account of tobacco. I am, in behalf of Mr. M———e & Co.,

Sir, your obedient humble servant,

GUSTAVUS.

MR. JOHN ANDERSON, *Merchant.*

To the care of James Osborne, to be left at the Reverend Mr. Odell's, New York."

Washington left the camp at Tappan on the morning of Monday, the 18th of September, for the purpose of conferring with Rochambeau and Ternay at Hartford as to plans for the campaign. Parsons, having with him the Arnold-Anderson letter of August 30 which he had received from Heron September 10, arrived from Connecticut just as Washington was leaving camp, too late to deliver to him the letter. "It should have been," he wrote to Washington in October, "forwarded earlier to your Excellency, but, as I supposed it to refer merely

to commerce, I chose to make it a subject of private conversation than of letter. On my arrival, your Excellency was just leaving camp, so that it was left to the ripening of the horrid event to detect this unsuspected instrument." What the result would have been had Washington received the letter before he left camp, is a matter of conjecture, but it is far from probable that any suspicion in consequence would have fallen upon Arnold. Such letters were not uncommon. There was nothing in this one which could lead any person to imagine that "John Anderson, Merchant," was the Adjutant General of the British Army, or that "Gustavus" was General Arnold. Supposing it to refer "merely to commerce," Parsons did not regard it of sufficient importance to warrant a formal communication. Washington would doubtless have taken the same view, and given it as little consideration. It was probably not until after André's trial on Friday the 29th that the real character of the letter became apparent, and it was on Sunday, October 1, that Parsons, notwithstanding his illness, enclosed the letter in a short note to Washington. A few days after he wrote him at length explaining the peculiar circumstances under which this "unsuspected instrument" had come into his hands.

Strangely enough, Arnold himself had unwittingly furnished the clue to his "Gustavus" letter of August 30, in the following letter to Colonel Sheldon, commanding the outposts at Salem and North Castle, written in the desperate endeavor to bring about a meeting between himself and Major André, alias, "John Anderson," and also the means by which his intended treason would almost certainly have been detected, had Parsons on reaching Sheldon's quarters on his way to camp, been shown this letter as requested:—

ROBINSON'S HOUSE, *September 10, 1780.*

DEAR SIR.—I wrote Mr. Anderson on the 3d instant, requesting him to meet me at your Quarters, and informed him that I had hinted the matter to you, and that you would send any letter to me, or inform me of his arrival. I did not mention his name in my letter to you, as I thought it unnecessary. I was obliged to write with great caution to him. My letter was signed, "Gustavus," to prevent any discovery in case it fell into the hands of the enemy. . .

If General Parsons has arrived, I wish you to show him my letter,

and tell him that my request is to have Mr. Anderson escorted to me." I am &c.,

To Colonel Sheldon.

Parsons on the 8th was still at Redding, but was expected to return to camp within a few days. Arnold knew that on his way he would stop at Sheldon's quarters, and probably reach there the 11th, by which time his letter of the 10th would have been received. He believed that Parsons, if shown his letter, there being nothing suspicious or unusual about it, would direct Colonel Sheldon to send Mr. Anderson with an escort to West Point. But unfortunately for Arnold's scheme, Parsons was then in possession of the letter from Arnold to "John Anderson," which, suspecting "something illicit," Heron had brought to Parsons unopened. If Sheldon had shown him Arnold's letter as requested, Parsons would instantly have seen that "Gustavus" was none other than Arnold himself, and that the statement made to Heron that the letter was written by a friend to the country, was as false as that he had opened and re-sealed it. The case would have been still clearer had Sheldon brought out Arnold's letter to him of the 7th, in which he pretends that he is trying to open "a channel of intelligence" through a person in New York; and also the letter of the same date which "John Anderson" wrote him from New York, in which he says "he will endeavor to obtain permission to go out with a flag which will be sent to Dobb's Ferry the 11th, and that the business he has in hand is of so private a nature that the public on neither side can be injured by it." These four letters collated furnished such convincing proof of Arnold's treachery, that had Sheldon shown those he had received, or even only that of the 10th, Arnold's arrest and exposure must have immediately followed. Why he did not show that of the 10th, at least, is not apparent, unless he was absent from his quarters when Parsons arrived or, not having heard further from Anderson, thought it of no importance. Though Parsons did not arrive until the 16th, having been detained by the return of his son from a cruise, there still remained sufficient time to communicate with Headquarters, and the arrest could have been effected while crossing at King's Ferry on the evening of the 18th, if not before.

Parsons in his letter to Washington does not disclose the name of the person who delivered to him Arnold's letter to André, probably because it was done in confidence, but from a letter he wrote to the General in 1782 after he retired from the army, and a dispatch from Governor Robertson to Lord George Germain, the first published very recently by Dr. Loring, and the latter some years since in "Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York," (Vol. VIII., page 804), we now know that this persons was William Heron of Redding, Connecticut, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter. Believed by Parsons to be "friendly to the country," and by Arnold too, as his caution proves, a man of excellent standing in his State, much trusted and wholly unsuspected, the Robertson dispatch, nevertheless, on its face convicts him of treasonable correspondence with the enemy during this visit to New York,—on its face, for it is not impossible that he was merely scheming to win the confidence of the enemy in hopes of obtaining information of importance. The following extracts from the dispatch are given for what is said of Parsons:—

This dispatch is entitled "Mr. Heron's Information in a conversation at New York, Monday, 4th September, 1780."

He lives at Redding in Connecticut; came in with a flag—returns this afternoon.

He had every opportunity he could desire to be acquainted with the public affairs, and especially of that Colony. Till April last he was in the Assembly, and a member for the County Correspondence—is now in office respecting the public accounts. He ever was an enemy to the Declaration of Independency, but he said little, except to the most trusty loyalists. He stands well with the officers of the Continental Army—with General Parsons he is intimate, and is not suspected.

He was at the interview between General Parsons and Mr. Izard, (Ralph Izard, of South Carolina) who arrived in Ternay's fleet and went on to Philadelphia. Izard has held a language that fills the country with jealousies. That the American Agents were duped by the Cabinet of France, Dr. Franklin superannuated, and all their agents unfaithful and despised, except the Lees. That they had given to France the Newfoundland fishery, and to Spain, the Floridas and he thought Georgia too. Whatever else of the continent might be conquered, is to belong to the United States. He

assured Parsons that France neither could, nor would, give the help requisite to establish the Independence of America. No further aid than what Ternay brought was coming. Whoever said there was deceived them. The British Navy in real strength was superior to the fleets both of France and Spain, and doubtless would continue so during the war. He did not believe they would be able to join this year, and the French, in that case, would be blocked up. That Ternay brought about 5000 land forces, and from what he had heard of the American Army, that aid would do little.

General Parsons was so much affected by this conversation, that immediately after Izard was gone, he wrote to General Greene at the camp in Jersey, beseeching him if possible to check Mr. Izard, from the dangerous tendency of his information upon the people at large.

General Parsons lives at Redding and his particular charge is to forward on the eastern recruits to Washington's camp. He is greatly discouraged under the prevailing disinclination of the people to the prolongation of the war. Very lately he told Mr. Heron that but 800 men of the 2500 drafted in Connecticut had gone on. . . . The people everywhere are tired of the war, are become beggared and distressed and suspicious of private views in all who are for continuing it. . . .

Washington's army, including the Highland garrison, all the three and six months' militia, was between ten and eleven thousand when he crossed the Hudson last month to Croton's River. They gave out they were 15,000, but Mr. Heron had his information from officers of rank in a confidential way. . . .

There was a general talk of raising men enough before the French arrived, who with them were to take New York. It died away upon the smallness of the French force and the difficulty of bringing up the drafted militia. Lately Washington conceived hopes from his project for procuring militia volunteers. He recommended subscriptions from house to house to raise bounties of hard money, to be paid to such as would take the field for the campaign in the reduction of New York. General Parsons employed many instruments to give it success, but it was abortive. Not a single town would come into it. . . . [Heron speaks of the discontent and bad state of affairs in the Highlands.] He dined with General Arnold, who commands at Col. Beverly Robinson's house, and parted from him last Wednesday. (Aug. 30th.) . . .

Mr. Heron is confident the whole rebellion must fall soon from the internal weakness of the country in general, and the still greater weakness of the party that have hitherto fomented the troubles, who

lose ground every day and divide from each other. All subdivisions are for peace with Great Britain on the old foundation. . . . [He spoke also of the bad state of the finances and sees many indications of a collapse.] From his intimate knowledge of Connecticut, not a tenth of the inhabitants are for contending for Independency if assured that the Charter shall stand good.

He hears of no magazines for provisions in any part of the Continent. It was impossible to form any. No man will sell upon credit. All private contracts are made in bullion. Congress is insolvent. All Departments are in debt. There is short sowing of the fields that there may be no surplus to be seized.

Whether Heron asked for a flag under a false pretence, and whether, having detected Arnold's falsehood as to the seal he gave the letter to Parsons from patriotic motives or because he was apprehensive of trouble for himself if he delivered it as agreed, must be judged of in the light of his conduct in New York and of subsequent developments.

Parsons' old friend and Tory classmate, William Walter, wrote him from Lloyd's Neck, October 1, inquiring

after the health of my old friend and his family, and to acquaint you that the household of Walter are all well. Long before this I had hoped that this horrid war would have had an end and that I should have been able to meet you and others in the opposition on the ground of peace and friendliness, but this happy period has not yet arrived. When it will is uncertain, and till it does I am contented to remain in patience, only lamenting the sad distresses which accrue to individuals and the public from the continuance of it.

Congress in September, had promoted Brigadier General Smallwood of Maryland to a Major Generalship, superseding both Generals Parsons and James Clinton. The manifest favoritism and injustice of this appointment naturally created great indignation. It was not that Smallwood was promoted, but that his advancement was at the expense of his seniors in rank and service. In writing to Washington October 4, Parsons did not object to Smallwood, but to the unfairness of Congress, and complained that he had himself been unjustly neglected, having served four years as Brigadier and half the time commanded a division of the army. "Had the same prin-

ciples actuated the councils of our States as have been the rules of proceeding in other nations, I should have had the rank due to the command long since conferred upon me." Congress seems finally to have recognized this, for when during the month he received his promotion, Congress restored him to his rank.

The indiscreet appointments to the army by Congress, particularly of foreigners who were often mere adventurers, were responsible for much of the jealousy and ill-feeling which existed among the officers; so much so that Washington was led to say that he wished that there was not a foreign officer in the army except Lafayette, who was different from all the others. After the removal of Gates from the Southern Army, Smallwood refused to serve under Baron Steuben, and threatened to resign unless Congress antedated his commission two years. The claim was too absurd to be allowed, the effect of which, as Washington wrote, "would be, not only to supersede the officers now in question, but many others, and, indeed, to derange and throw into confusion the rank of the whole line of Major Generals." In 1777, Congress elected five Major Generals, Stirling, Mifflin, St. Clair, Stephen, and Lincoln, passing over Arnold who was their senior in rank and immensely their superior in military ability and experience. That each State should be allotted general officers in proportion to the men furnished, seemed to the members more important than to secure competent officers to command. Had Arnold been treated by Congress with the consideration and kindness he received from Washington who knew his value as an officer, it is doubtful, bad as he was in many respects, if he would have been false to his country.

In consequence of his five years of camp life, Parsons had, in a great degree, lost that vigor and buoyancy of health which he had enjoyed up to the time he entered the army, and his enfeebled constitution rendered him liable to very severe attacks of malarial fever. The sickness he refers to in his letter to Washington of October 1, was of this character, and by the 4th his fever had so increased that he was much depressed and very uncertain of the issue. In this condition he writes the following letter to his wife:—

TAPPAN, *October 4, 1780.*

MY DEAR.—I have received one letter from you which gave great

satisfaction to me. I should be happy in having it in my power to write you more fully, but my strength will only permit my committing to paper what is necessary. 'Tis the sixth day since I have been badly seized with a Fever which has from the first been increasing, that I am now in Doubt whether I could get home if the weather should be good. What the Issue will be, Time will decide. When the period arrives when we must bid a final Adieu, I wish it may be our Lot to meet our Fate with Christian Fortitude. I know we have a Mediator with the Father who is constantly making Intercessions for the Sins of Those who believe, and on His Intercession I depend for Safety. However of this I am certain, that I shall be disposed of in a Manner which was designed best to Answer my Place in the great Scale. Give yourself no Concern for me, but take care of yourself and our dear children. Let them be brought up in the belief of revealed religion and the practice of every moral Virtue, without which no man can support an honest character here or expect future happiness.

As to the disposition of our children (if we should now be separated), perhaps it will be best to know of my sisters whether they will take one or two of the girls till they have gained their education. Enoch I should wish to be bound to your brother or my brother, Lane, until twenty-one years of age. Billy and Lucia must add their help to assist you to live and take care of the younger children. I am uncertain in my own mind what to do with the little I have. [After suggesting what seemed under all circumstances to be the best disposition of his affairs in case of his death, he continues:] My strength fails me and I must return to the bed. My most cordial and affectionate love for you has continued without abating to this time. Give my blessing to all my children and accept this as a Testimony of unabating love to you.

SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 6th Parsons wrote to General Washington from the camp at Tappan, asking leave to return home to his family in Redding on account of his severe sickness, and suggests that on his return to the army, he be appointed "to the command of the troops near New Castle and Horseneck until their service shall expire, which I imagine will nearly end my own." Washington appears to have granted his request for a leave of absence. In the latter part of November, he was again prostrated by a recurrence of the fever, and was unable to return to camp until late in December.

CHAPTER XXI

PARSONS' PROMOTION AS MAJOR GENERAL. MUTINY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AND JERSEY LINES. MORRISANIA EXPEDITION. RECEIVES THANKS OF CONGRESS. FAIRFIELD INVESTIGATION. HIS DANGEROUS ILLNESS. YALE AND HARVARD CONFER ON HIM A MASTER'S DEGREE.

October, 1780—May, 1781

ON the 23d of October, 1780, General Parsons received from Congress his well-deserved and long-delayed promotion as Major General in the Continental Army. He had served as Colonel from the Lexington Alarm until August 9, 1776, when he was made Brigadier General, as Division Commander since Putnam's disability in 1779 and during the greater part of the previous eighteen months, and was justly entitled to the rank due to his command. Wooster dead, Spencer resigned, Putnam incapacitated and Arnold a deserter, Parsons had become the highest officer of the line in the State, and there was no further excuse for delaying his advancement. November 11th, while at his home in Redding on sick leave, he writes Washington thanking him for his promotion and proposing to adjust his private affairs so that he can soon again join the army; and encloses an act of the Connecticut Legislature for filling the State's quota, "which if executed with spirit, I hope will have the desired succcess."

On the 20th, while still at Redding, he again writes to Headquarters:—

DEAR GENERAL.—Your favor of the 16th, I received yesterday, and should have returned to the Army very soon, but I have a return of the Ague-Fever to-day too violently to admit my entertaining any thoughts of doing duty in my present state. I shall so soon as my health is confirmed, immediately return to camp.

I am with respect and esteem,

Yr. Excellency's obt. servt.,

S. H. PARSONS.

Towards the end of November, the army went into winter quarters; the Pennsylvania line near Morristown, the New Jersey regiments at Pompton, and the Eastern troops in the Highlands. Washington's Headquarters, his "dreary quarters," as he called them, were at New Windsor. The French remained at Newport, except the Duke of Lauzun's Legion, which was cantoned at Lebanon in Connecticut. The quarters of Parsons' Division were opposite West Point, just back of Constitution Island, about one and a half miles from the river and not far from the main road. It is described as advantageously situated between "two high mountains"—"a primitive spot quite out of the world."

Congress in October, 1780, had provided for a reorganization of the army to take effect the 1st of January, 1781. The plan was to consolidate the smaller regiments, thus reducing the number of regiments without decreasing the force in the field. The officers for the new regiments were to be selected from those of the old who desired to continue in the service, preference being given according to seniority. The retiring officers were to have half pay for life. The duty of reorganizing the Connecticut line devolved upon General Parsons, who had now returned to camp. The number of regiments composing the Division, was to be reduced from eight to five. Under Parsons' directions, the Third and Fourth Regiments were consolidated as the First; the Fifth and Seventh as the Second; the Second and Ninth as the Third; the First and Eighth as the Fifth and the Sixth was retained as the Fourth. Pursuant to the provisions of the resolutions of Congress, General Parsons called upon the officers of the Connecticut line to signify in writing whether it was their wish to remain in the service or to retire, hoping that "every officer whose age, health and circumstances will allow it, will be willing to continue his service to his country." Colonels Wyllys, Bradley, Starr and Meigs, all of whom had done excellent service, retired. Durkee of the old Fourth, became Colonel of the new First; Swift of the Seventh, of the new Second; Samuel B. Webb of the Ninth, of the new Third; Butler of the Second, of the new Fourth and Sherman of the Eighth, of the new Fifth.

December 2, General Parsons issued the following orders as to building huts for his men:—

The hutting ground is to be laid out for five regiments, to be calculated for four hundred men each. Each of said regiments is to appoint an officer to lay out the ground and superintend the building of the huts under the direction of a field officer who is to supervise the whole. As great uniformity and exactness as possible, is to be observed in arranging and building the huts, which are to be carried up square, not less than six feet high, with rafters nine feet in length from the eaves to the ridge pole. Lines are to be drawn within which each regiment is to get timber and firewood.

In case of an alarm, the Division was to man the Works on Constitution Island and the North and South Redoubts.

December 25, General Parsons writes from Fishkill to the Commander-in-Chief, asking that Lieutenants Grant and Cook, who, taken prisoners at Fort Washington, had now been exchanged, be restored to their rank in the new establishment of the army. January 1, he wrote to Governor Trumbull as follows:

CAMP IN HIGHLANDS, *January 1, 1781.*

SIR.—The new arrangement of the army taking place this day, suggests to me the idea of proposing to your Excellency the propriety of sending the invalids of our own State to New London or such parts of the State where they may be serviceable. We have in the Line six or eight officers and a considerable number of soldiers, who must soon be transferred to the Corps of Invalids, capable of doing garrison duty, but unfit for marching regiments. I believe much expense might be saved the State if they were stationed within it; nor can I see that Philadelphia wants guards half as much as New London or Simsbury, and I must believe Congress would admit of it, (at least as to our Line) on application. It will be necessary to know the intention of the Government soon on this head, as we had rather postpone the transfer a few weeks than the State should lose the benefit of them if they choose to improve them.

I find the soldiers in general averse to receiving the lands agreeable to the Act of the Assembly. Their necessities are so great they cannot think it reasonable they should suffer the delay and probable loss which will attend the sale after the appraisal. Some of the officers will consent to the proposal and forward their power to the committee; and as this will require some time, they desire the appraisal to proceed. If their notes of last year may be received in

payment, many more would be glad to sign a power to receive the land.

I am with esteem yr. obt. servant,

To Governor Trumbull. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Early in January, the Pennsylvania Line, encamped near Morristown, openly mutinied and marched toward Philadelphia, where Congress was in session. On the 5th, General Heath, then in command at West Point, wrote General Parsons, at the request of General Washington, asking him to communicate the facts to the troops through the regimental commanders, as it would be impossible to keep the matter long a secret, and to do it in such a way as to produce in them a consciousness of superior virtue under equal if not greater trials, and to ascertain from the officers if there were any indications of trouble in the Connecticut Line. At a council of General Officers held a few days afterwards, it was determined to form a provisional detachment of New England troops for quelling any mutiny which might arise. The command of this detachment was sought by Parsons, and he offered to go as a volunteer if he could not have the command. But General Howe claimed it as his right on the grounds of seniority. On the 12th, Washington wrote Heath that "in point of right Howe ought to have it, but in point of policy it might be better to give it either to General Parsons or General Glover, and this I told him." On the 13th, Heath wrote to Parsons: "You may depend in case General Howe does not march with the detachment, that you will command it. It belongs to Howe of right, but at this time when the whole detachment is composed of Eastern troops, in a view of policy, I wish you would have the command;" and again on the 16th: "I assure that I have with you many anxious thoughts respecting the defection in the Pennsylvania Line, but by a letter I received from his Excellency, General Washington, the last evening, it seems the matter is in a train of accommodation. The General, however, wishes the detachment still to be held in readiness to march. I am pleased with your ardent desire of going with the troops in case they march, but I think you cannot with propriety go as a volunteer. You already know my sentiments with respect to the other." On the 14th, General Parsons wrote to Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth at Hartford:—

January 14, 1781.

DEAR SIR.—The news of the revolt of the Pennsylvanians will have reached you before you will have received this; their subsequent conduct and the present state of the affair, the effect produced in the other Lines by this event and the general circumstances of the troops are matters you ought to be informed of. This defection seems to be a systematical affair; the mutineers have appointed their officers and observe the greatest order and strictest discipline. General Wayne and Colonel Butler are permitted by them to remain in Princeton without command. General St. Clair and Marquis De Lafayette were ordered to leave the town in an hour and a half on pain of being made prisoners. A committee of Congress is at Trenton and requested the troops to move to that place, but were informed that Princeton afforded good quarters for any gentlemen who had business to transact with them. They demand a discharge of all soldiers enlisted in 76 and 77; and those in 78 to be discharged at the expiration of three years; those enlisted for the war since that time to serve according to the tenor of their engagements; immediate payment of their wages and arrears of clothing and ample satisfaction for past depreciation.

The militia of Jersey decline reducing them, because, they say, they have real grievances which ought to be redressed. In the Jersey Line there appears so much uneasiness as not to make it expedient to improve them against the insurgents, and Parr's Riflemen have joined them. The Committee of Congress are making overtures on one side, and Sir Harry Clinton on the other; these, however, they did not appear to incline to listen to, as they immediately confined the emissary and his guide. Under these circumstances, to the honor of the New England Lines, the soldiers in general highly condemn their conduct and are forming a detachment to reduce them by force. I never saw them so spirited; furloughed men refused to go out of camp; our servants begged to be armed and sent with the detachment, and men without coats and without shirts, insisted they were able and willing to be ordered on the command. I own I did not see a great prospect of their returning to their duty by the last accounts unless compelled by force, though General Sullivan says he thinks he shall come to an honorable capitulation with them, but I am unable to see what terms can be honorably made with them with arms in their hands. Our detachment is still ready to march, but no orders have arrived to move.

Although on this occasion our troops have shown a proper spirit, yet I fear we are not long to expect it. We have six hundred men unfit for duty for want of proper clothing; most of them have no

coat of any kind; they have received no money for near twelve months, and some are fifteen months in arrears of pay. This obliged them to sell their depreciated notes at whatever price any man will give for them; add to this the danger of our being wholly destitute of bread within a week, and no rum has found its way to camp for a long time past. On these unexaggerated facts, I leave you to draw consequences. For my own part, unless we receive some money and clothing immediately, and supplies of provisions are regularly made, and our army is completed before the campaign opens, I see no great success to be expected from our faint and half-made resistance. I believe I have as much money as any officer in camp, and to clearly show you our condition, I have counted every farthing of cash I possess in the world, and it amounts to eight Continental dollars and two-thirds of a dollar, and where or when shall I add another, I know no more than a child yet unborn. I am, Dr. Sir, Yr. obr. servant,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, Hartford.

Colonel Wadsworth replied:—

HARTFORD, *February 12, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.— . . . The patience and fortitude of the Connecticut troops, their good conduct and eagerness to reduce the revolting troops would command relief from anybody but us, and I did hope the Council would have called on the towns immediately whilst their fears were up, for a sum in hard cash, as I should expect more from their fears than their justice. The Assembly is to be together on the 21st instant, but what can they do, or rather what will they do? Already we are told that the people will not or cannot pay their taxes, and we are certain the emissaries from the enemy never were more successful in their schemes than at present. We have evidently many people here who are become cool to the cause, and many others who would sacrifice everything to their avarice. Those who boldly and freely demand justice for the Army are avoided and every effort is making to prevent their success. The next choice of Representatives will be entirely new, so much as to change our politics for the worse; this is the dark side of the picture. The people in general are disposed to have a vigorous campaign, a good Army and to do them justice, but the cunning, the weak, wicked and avaricious are, (though by no means a majority) ever busy and are more than a match for the honest part of the

community, but the fears of the rascally part of the community will, I hope, keep them down.

Yours sincerely,

To Major General Parsons. J. WADSWORTH.

In answer to the request that he should ascertain the sentiments of the Line under his command, about which there was some uneasiness, General Parsons wrote to General Washington the following letter, which must have afforded him great relief:—

CAMP HIGHLANDS, *January 12, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The instances of firmness in the Connecticut Line exhibited amongst the privates since I had the honor of seeing you, fully convinces me of the justice of my observations yesterday on that subject, and I believe the same spirit pervades the whole line. In two instances application was made this morning for furloughs by privates who had been three years absent. The men were informed that the defection in the Pennsylvania Line would probably require their attention to reduce them to their duty. They answered without hesitation, they had rather never see home than the cause of the Country should suffer by such unjustifiable conduct, or that your Excellency should be in danger from that or any other misconduct. They went back with great cheerfulness and said they would never apply again until they were brought back to their duty. And in many instances the officers' servants have begged to be armed and permitted to go on this duty. From these circumstances and other observations, I am convinced the fullest confidence may in this instance, be placed in the Connecticut troops.

I am, Dr. General, Your Obedt. Servt.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

The trouble in the Pennsylvania Line was ended by a substantial compliance with the demands of the insurgents, but the leniency shown them only encouraged a revolt among the New Jersey troops. Prompt action had now become necessary, and on the 22d, General Howe was directed to take command of the detachment of Eastern troops and put down the mutiny, which he did in an effectual manner. The result was disappointing, as appears from the following letter from Parsons to Trumbull:—

CONNECTICUT HUTS, *January 31, 1781*

SIR.—In my last I informed you of the revolt of the Jersey Line, since which they have been surprised by the New England troops, laid down their arms and returned to their duty, and their leaders tried, condemned and shot on the parade within half an hour after they were delivered up. I hoped this would have ended our troubles of this kind, but the flame has caught and the New York troops refuse to do their duty till they are paid and clothed. How much farther they will proceed, time will unfold. I think it my duty to give you this early information and to assure you that I fear that nothing short of a sum of money very speedily furnished them will keep the New England Lines from following their example.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Norwich, January 24, 1781, General Jedidiah Huntington wrote to General Parsons:—

I am happy in hearing the scene which opened at Morris and changed to Princeton, has had an issue much better than one's fears. Our State is slow in recruiting; they seem, however, determined to procure the men called for, from a conviction of the absolute necessity of the measure. Upon the tidings brought by General Knox respecting the Pennsylvania Line, it was moved in the Governor's Council to send our old soldiers a gratuity of twenty dollars each; but objectors arose and nothing has been done as yet. When they know what Massachusetts has done in the matter, I am in hopes we shall follow the example. T'would have been more honorable to have been foremost.

I am dear Sir, Your obedient servant,

To Major General Parsons. J. HUNTINGTON.

General Knox had gone to Massachusetts in the interest of the Massachusetts Line and was now bringing back with him funds for paying off the troops. Knowing this, and apprehending serious trouble in the Connecticut Line unless the State made provisions for her troops before his return, General Parsons wrote the following urgent letter to Governor Trumbull:—

HIGHLANDS, *February 5, 1781.*

SIR.—I was honored with your Excellency's letter of the 31st ult. General Knox's return before any decisive measures have been

taken by Connecticut will be attended with unhappy effects, especially as he brings solid coin for paying the Massachusetts troops. You may, however, rest assured, that every effort will be used to quiet the troops which is within the compass of the remaining influence of the officers of every rank. But Sir, I ought to assure you of a truth in its consequences very interesting to the weal of the State, which is that our influence with the troops is daily lessening, and without the aid of the State will soon be reduced to nothing. It is a truth equally clear that the army has hitherto been kept together more by the joint influence of the officers, than from any other consideration, though by many, and I fear by some in power, they have been considered as the fomentors of disturbances and requited with sentiments and language injurious to their feelings as well as repugnant to facts. This notwithstanding, they will continue to use every measure in their power to preserve order and harmony in the Line; but if the State does nothing to enable them to preserve an influence over the soldiery, I freely own that 'tis my opinion very little more can be expected from it. The soldiers tell them plainly, "we have no doubt of your good intentions and that you are using every exertion in your power to see justice done us and make our situation comfortable, but we know your influence in the State is at an end, and we constantly hear you traduced and treated with the greatest disrespect in the country, and have, therefore, little to hope from your exertions." Under these circumstances, I ought not to forbear informing the Council that unless some money is soon sent on, both to officers and soldiers, I believe it will not be in the power of the officers to preserve the order of the camp. I think it will be of good consequence to send some respectable members of the Council to the Line that their influence may be jointly exerted with the officers on this occasion. If this measure should be adopted, I believe the good purposes of sending them will be better answered by appointing to that business some gentlemen of acknowledged abilities who have not been generally considered so friendly to the feelings of the officers and soldiers as some others. Colonel Elderkin or Mr. Wales I believe would answer better purposes than Colonel Wadsworth, Mr. Huntington or some other gentlemen. I have not a distrust of their friendship, but the country wants as much conviction as the Army. We will unite our influence with theirs, and their report to the country will have more weight than from those who are supposed to go full lengths with the claims of the Army. . . . The New England troops are yet quiet, but I have not a moment's peace lest they should be induced to tarnish their honor which they have so justly acquired by a delay

in the State to do them some justice and relieve their present distresses.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAM. H. PARSONS.

That part of Pennsylvania known as the Wyoming District, which had been largely settled by New England people, being claimed both by Connecticut and Pennsylvania under their respective charters, the owners of the conflicting grants of the two States naturally resolved themselves into two parties, each trying to oust the other. Parsons in 1774, had been one of a committee with Roger Sherman, Governor Griswold and others, to aid Governor Trumbull in prosecuting the claims of Connecticut and in preparing the papers necessary for submitting the dispute to the Courts of Great Britain for settlement. He had thus become thoroughly familiar with, as well as much interested in, the matter. Knowing the jealousy which existed between the contending parties, and realizing the impolicy of stationing troops in the Valley whose interests would lead them to take sides with one or the other of them, thereby creating disturbances which must prove injurious in the present critical period of the Revolution, General Parsons, in the interest of peace, wrote General Washington as follows:—

CAMP IN HIGHLANDS, *January 10, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—On my return to camp I was favored with the Act of Congress for relieving the garrison of Wyoming, and would beg leave to inform your Excellency that many of the inhabitants of New Jersey are interested in the lands on the Susquehanna under the claims of Pennsylvania, and at different times have assisted the Pennsylvanians in their attempts to remove the New England settlers. This being a matter which will exceedingly affect the contending States, I am persuaded your Excellency would wish to place in that garrison officers and soldiers who will least alarm the jealousies of the contending parties. The New England settlers will have no objection to any troops from Virginia, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts Bay or New Hampshire, or from Colonel Hazen's regiment, not being citizens of Connecticut or Pennsylvania. Indeed, the last mentioned regiment has about twenty men of Schott's Corps which are at Wyoming and will be annexed to that regiment. Perhaps a command from Colonel Hazen's

regiment will be as unexceptionable as from any corps in the Army. I have an opportunity of sending to Wyoming, and could I be able to inform them that the garrison is to be relieved from the Jersey troops, their fears will be quieted. The bearer will wait an answer if your Excellency pleases to favor me with one.

I am with the greatest respect Yr. obt. servt.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

In January, 1781, General Washington, in order to protect the defenseless inhabitants between Greenwich and New York and at the same time strike a blow which would arouse a better spirit in the Army, directed General Parsons to take command of a detachment of four battalions, including the guards upon the lines, and, marching with secrecy and rapidity, to beat up the quarters and destroy the barracks and forage of DeLancey's Refugee Corps at Morrisania and Throg's Neck. Three battalions under Colonels Hazen, Scammel and Sherman, marched from the Highlands by Golden's Bridge, through Bedford to Kingstreet, while Lt. Col. Hull with the fourth battalion marched from the outpost at Pine's Bridge on the Croton River where he commanded to Youngs, both columns reaching these points on Sunday evening, the 21st. The column commanded by Hull, which was to make the attack, pushed on towards Kingsbridge, passing Fort Independence at one o'clock and halting opposite Fort Washington where a pontoon bridge crossed the Harlem River. Here Colonel Hull first acquainted his men with the object of the expedition. Leaving Major Maxwell to destroy the pontoon and prevent the enemy from crossing except by a long detour via Kingsbridge, he continued his march along the east bank of the Harlem, placing guards at Williams' and DeLancey's bridges over the Bronx, and sending a detachment under Captain Pritchard to attack Throg's Neck. The column under General Parsons, after resting a few hours at Kingsbridge, marched by White Plains to East Chester, where it was in position to observe the enemy and cover Hull's retreat. The expectation was to take the enemy by surprise, but a small creek near DeLancey's quarters was so swollen by the recent rains that the passage could be effected only by mounting the infantry behind horsemen, and the noise made in crossing alarmed the Post. The assault, however, was so rapid

and vigorous that it was entirely successful in its main object. All the barracks and a great quantity of forage gathered for use in New York were destroyed. Fifty-four prisoners were taken, a number of cattle and about sixty horses. After collecting the prisoners, horses and cattle, the retreat commenced.

Hull was now eight miles inside the enemy's lines and Fort Independence was only four miles from East Chester where Parsons was. Half of the British Army was in his rear. The noise of the musketry and the light of the burning barracks had aroused the neighboring garrisons. Alarm guns were fired and rockets sent up in quick succession from all the Posts. It would be a miracle almost should his small force, tired out by its night march, escape the fresh and ever increasing foe assailing its rear and flanks. Crossing DeLancey's Bridge under the enemy's fire, thus putting the Bronx as well as the Harlem between his corps and the Forts, Hull marched without much interruption until he reached a stone church and jail. The enemy firing upon him from the windows of these buildings he attacked with the bayonet and released thirty-two American prisoners confined there. Here he was joined by Captain Pritchard who had been completely successful at Throg's Neck. For the last two miles of his retreat the skirmishing was sharp and the firing constant and heavy. Twice Parsons sent word that a large body of British were advancing from Kingsbridge and that he must hasten his march lest both detachments should be cut off. This force he directed Sherman to oppose until Hull should come up, and in order to relieve Hull he sent Hazen's regiment which, concealed behind a stone fence, by its sudden and well-directed fire checked the enemy's pursuit. A junction having been formed without further molestation, the General gave orders for retiring by way of New Rochelle in one column, the enemy continuing a scattered fire and Colonel Scammel with the artillery covering the retreat. With a force not exceeding two thousand men under his command; more than thirty miles from any part of the main army or other support; both officers and men worn with the fatigues and hardships already encountered; a large part of the British Army within five or six miles and the main objects of the expedition fully accomplished, General Parsons did not deem it prudent either to follow up the advantage secured

by Hazen's regiment, or to attack the column advancing from Kingsbridge. Indeed the situation was so critical that it was unsafe even to halt for refreshments, and he continued his march through a severe storm of hail and snow until twelve o'clock that night. Stopping one day at Horseneck to rest his troops, he marched them back to their cantonments in the Highlands.

The following are General Parsons' official reports of the expedition, made to Major General Heath, the Commander of the Department. In them Parsons gives great credit to Lieutenant Colonel Hull and his officers:—

HORSENECK, *January 23, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—After an attempt to execute your orders, which was attended with as much success as an expedition which involved so many complicated movements could reasonably promise, we returned to Sawpits. Though in some parts the contest was warm and severe, we have been able to carry into execution the principal part of the plan. We have burned the Huts, cut away the bridge, and taken some prisoners and cattle. We have lost one, Lieut. Thompson, killed; Capt. Dorrance wounded and some privates killed and wounded. The troops are so exceedingly fatigued that I have ordered them to take this route as I could on no other road cover the troops in any degree comparably. I propose to move them, as soon as the weather will possibly permit, to Bedford, where I wish to halt them two days to recover a little from their fatigue before they march to their Huts. I hope it will not exceed Saturday before we arrive at our Quarters. As it is not possible to make a particular report of the transactions at this time, I must beg your patience for a few days.

I am, Sir, with respect Yr. obt. servt.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To Major General Heath.

BEDFORD, *January 24, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I received your favor of 22d at Horseneck this morning at ten o'clock, and immediately put my troops in march for this place with orders to reach Crompond to-morrow, which is as much as is possible in their fatigued situation; and set out myself with an intention of being at your Quarters to-night, but find the snow deepening as I come on, which renders it impossible without fresh horses, and have therefore sent an express and will follow as early as possible to-morrow. In the meantime I beg you to send orders to halt the troops at Crompond until I see you. I am, with all

the field officers, decidedly of opinion that moving our troops according to your present order, (from the delay heretofore made by the present circumstances of the troops), will be our infallible ruin. I would, therefore, beg of you to suspend the execution till I see you and give your orders accordingly. I hope to be with you before to-morrow noon. We are in good spirits and the little success we have had gives good animation to our troops.

Yr. obt. servt.,

To Maj. General Heath. SAML. H. PARSONS.

HIGHLANDS, *January 25th, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—In obedience to your order I marched on the 19th inst. from the Highlands with the battalions under my command to destroy the Huts in Morrisania which covered the thieves assembled there under the direction of Col. DeLancey, and on the 21st I arrived in Kings Street, and Lieut. Col. Hull with one battalion at White Plains, nearly at the same time. In the evening of the 21st, Lieut. Col. Hull took up his march from White Plains, and having arrived near Kingsbridge, detached Capts. Denner and Benton with their companies to William's bridge to prevent any communication with the enemy on that road; Capt. White to DeLancey's bridge to occupy that pass and preserve a communication with the troops posted at East Chester to cover his operations and to act against the enemy at West Farms; and Capt. Pritchard with his company and a small body of militia under Lieut. Mosier, to possess himself of Throg's Neck; and with the remaining troops marched towards Morrisania leaving a sufficient number of troops under the command of Major Maxwell, Capt. Dix and J. Williams, to watch the enemy in their redoubt No. 8, and to destroy a pontoon bridge over Harlem River constructed under command of that redoubt to keep up an easy communication with the troops at Fort Washington.

The Huts, (destroying which was the principal object in view) were almost two miles below the redoubt towards the point of Morrisania, and in the march Col. Hull was unexpectedly obstructed by the destruction of a bridge over a creek within a small distance of the Huts and which by the heavy rains the preceding day had been rendered deep and very difficult in passing; but Capt. Honniwell having on this occasion collected about twenty horsemen, the infantry under Capts. Fox, S. Williams and Dorrance, were passed over the creek by the horsemen; but so much time being necessarily taken up in this matter, they were discovered before they had passed and most of the enemy fled. The troops immediately fired all the Huts in that quarter and killed and took all the men who had not

previously escaped, and on their return forded the creek (the horsemen not being collected at that time).

In the meantime Major Maxwell succeeded in destroying the bridge and executed every other part of the duty assigned him with faithfulness and good conduct. The several detachments to William's and DeLancey's bridges and on Throg's Neck succeeded according to my expectations, and Col. Hull and Major Maxwell arrived at DeLancey's bridge in season to disperse the enemy who had collected to seize that pass; and having joined the detachments under Capt. White at the bridge and that under Capt. Pritchard at West Chester, returned with his prisoners, cattle, horses &c. on the road towards East Chester. The troops under my immediate command having arrived at the village of East Chester about half an hour after six in the morning, I immediately sent parties of observation on the different roads leading to that place and detached some horsemen on the road to West Chester and William's bridge for intelligence from Col. Hull, and soon found he was retiring on the road from Westchester and that the enemy had collected and were harrassing him in his march on his flank and in his rear, on which I detached Col. Hazen with one hundred men with orders to Col. Hull to retire in the rear of Col. Hazen's command and gain the village of East Chester with as much expedition as the very fatigued state of his men would admit. Col. Hazen having posted his men in an advantageous and concealed place, Col. Hull retired according to his directions, and the enemy advanced without discovering Col. Hazen until they received a well directed fire which immediately scattered and dispersed them. At this instant the British troops appeared in force on the road from William's bridge within a mile of East Chester. This obliged me to advance Col. Sherman with his battalion and part of Col. Scammel's troops on that road; the remaining troops with Col. Scammel were held in reserve, and I directed Col. Hazen and Lieut. Col. Hull to retire to East Chester that our force brought together there be united if the British should advance (they being at much less distance from that place than Col. Hazen's or Lieut. Col. Hull's detachments were). But on Col. Sherman taking post on the hill west of the village, the British troops halted and did not again advance. Col. Hazen retiring according to orders drew the enemy on near to East Chester when Capt. Kemper opened his field piece upon them so well directed as immediately to disperse them. Some were seen to fall and the rest retreated in great disorder towards West Chester.

Having obtained the objects I had in command agreeable to your directions, I returned by the road through New Rochelle.

In the course of this transaction the enemy suffered very considerably, nearly thirty being killed at the Huts and the several guards which were attacked in the night, and many were seen to fall in the various actions in the morning of the 22d, but as my orders were to hazard nothing after the object of this enterprise was accomplished, tis imposible to give their loss with certainty. All the Huts and a considerable part of the forage were burned, the pontoon bridge destroyed, about 120 cattle and horses driven up from Morrisania and fifty-four of DeLancey's Corps made prisoners.

In justice to Lieut. Col. Hull and his officers I ought to say that much of the success of this enterprise is owing to the judicious arrangements made by him, and the fortitude and address with which they were executed by them; and in the state of excessive fatigue of his men, the retiring through West Chester in good order and bringing off his prisoners near two miles under the enemy's fire until he was supported by Col. Hazen, does him great honor. Capt. Honniwell, who on this occasion had collected about twenty horsemen, was particularly serviceable.

And I feel under great obligations to Cols. Hazen, Scammel and Sherman for the great assistance I received from them in making the necessary arrangements and the cheerfulness with which they and the troops under their command executed the several parts of the duty assigned them.

The destruction of the Huts in a place the enemy considered as perfectly secure (from the protection of a redoubt and the distance being much greater to the only possible way of retreat than the enemy's march to possess the same pass) I hope will give some relief to our frontiers which have suffered so much from the incursions of these Banditti, and shall be happy if the manner in which it was executed should meet your approbation.

Col. Hull's report and the returns of the killed, wounded and missing are enclosed.

I have the honor to be Dear General

Yr. obt. servt.,

To Major General Heath. S. H. Parsons.

The following from Major Alden to Major Tallmadge is another account of the expedition:—

Dear Major.— . . . A detachment consisting of four battalions under the command of Major General Parsons, including the guards upon the Lines, was formed and marched from camp the 18th and 19th inst. The object was to beat up and destroy the Western

Quarters of DeLancey's Corps at Morrisania and Throg's Neck. The necessary arrangements being made, three battalions commanded by Colonels Hazen, Scammel and Sherman, under the immediate command of General Parsons, made their route from camp by Hait's over Golden's Bridge, through Bedford to Kingstreet, while Colonel Hull, who commanded the operating party consisting of the other battalions, was marching from his Quarters near Pine's Bridge to Young's. Both columns having arrived at these points on Sunday evening the 21st, Colonel Hull proceeded directly on his march to execute his orders, passing through Mile Square, leaving a detachment to secure William's Bridge, another to watch Fort No. 8, and destroy the pontoon bridge over the Harlem, the remainder to operate against Morrisania and Throg's Neck, while the other column, after refreshing a few hours at Kingstreet, marched by the Plains to East Chester in order to secure his retreat and act as circumstances might require. Colonel Hull's success exceeded our expectations. The huts were destroyed, a number of prisoners taken, a considerable quantity of forage consumed, and, meeting with many unexpected difficulties, he discovered his military knowledge and good judgement in surmounting them and began his retreat over DeLancey's Bridge by dawn of day. General Parsons had conducted his march with so much secrecy and exactness that he arrived at the very moment when his assistance and counsel were wanted. By parties which he had sent out to learn Hull's situation, he found the enemy were pursuing him very closely with considerable force. Col. Hazen was immediately ordered with his battalion to his assistance, who took an advantageous position and by a fierce fire and unexpected, checked their further progress. In this situation the General, who was exceedingly attentive to his duty and the condition of the troops, discovered a body of horse and foot advancing towards East Chester and Fowler's Hill within one mile of the church. Col. Sherman with the battalion under his command was detached to secure that road and oppose the enemy till Hazen and Hull should have joined the main body at the church. These difficulties prevented the further advance of the enemy from that quarter, the several detachments were collected immediately, patrolling parties ordered upon the roads leading to Williams and Kingsbridge and the object of the enterprise fully accomplished, the General gave orders for the retiring by way of New Rochelle in one column, the enemy continuing a scattering fire. Col. Scammel with the artillery covered the retreat.

The plan was executed with so much judgement, good order and

exactness that great credit is due to the General for his uniform and military conduct. He speaks very highly of the officers under his command. I never heard the militia say so much in praise of the Continental troops for their good order and steadiness amidst so warm a fire.

The General was exceedingly pleased with the conduct of the Continental troops and many of the militia in this service, yet with tears he lamented the distresses of those unhappy people between the lines that were now increased by the promiscuous plunder of a set of merciless freebooters governed by no principle but avarice and revenge, who in all movements of this kind are followers of the army, and whom it is impossible to restrain, being under no control. This is the only stain upon the conduct of the day and those alone ought to bear the blame who can be guilty of actions so cruel and inhuman.

Yours &c.,

R. ALDEN.

January 25, Washington writing to General Heath, thanking him for his account of the success of the expedition against Morrisania, advises, "since the troops under the command of General Parsons appear to be so much fatigued," that Howe's provisional detachment (that organized to use in quelling any mutiny which might arise) be completed from other troops, and suggests that "by the address of General Parsons some volunteers may be obtained from the brigades on the east side of the River," about which he will be best able to determine when he sees General Parsons.

On the 29th, Washington congratulated the Army in the following very complimentary terms:—

The General is happy in congratulating this Army on the success of the enterprise against the enemy at Morrisania on the morning of the 22d instant, in which, besides a number of the enemy who were killed, upwards of fifty were made prisoners, the huts and forage burned, pontoon bridge cut away and a large number of cattle driven off. The address and gallantry of the officers, the fortitude and patience of the troops, exhibited on this occasion, does them much honor, and while the conduct of every officer has merited the General's approbation, he feels himself under particular obligations to Major General Parsons and Lieut. Colonel Hull, to whom he presents his particular thanks.

On the 31st, he wrote to the President of Congress, enclosing the reports of Parsons and Hull, and says:

General Parsons arrangements were judicious, and the conduct of the officers and men employed on the occasion is entitled to the highest praise. The position of the Corps, two or three miles within some of the enemy's redoubts, required address and courage in the execution of the enterprise.

The following is an extract from the Journals of Congress under date of February 5, 1781.

A letter from General Washington of January 31st, 1781, enclosing a letter from Major General Parsons of the 25th of January, was received.

Ordered. That the letter of Major General Parsons, with the papers enclosed, relative to his successful expedition against the enemy's Post at Morrisania, with so much of the General's letter as relates thereto, be referred to the Committee of Intelligence, and that the Commander-in-Chief return the thanks of Congress to Major General Parsons, and the officers and men under his command, and to inform him that Congress have directed this publication to be made in testimony of their approbation of his judicious arrangements, and of the spirit and military conduct displayed by the officers and men under him on this occasion.

In a letter to the President of Congress, dated February 17, 1781, Washington says: "I shall not fail to communicate to Major General Parsons and the officers and men who were under his command, the very flattering notice which Congress has been pleased to take of their expedition to Morrisania."

Huts, 31st January, 1781, General Parsons writes to his wife now living at Redding:—

My Dear.—I have not heard a word from the family since I wrote by Mr. Wright. I wish you and they may be well. I thank you for your offer of the pigs—should have sent for them before this, but the expedition which I commanded below prevented. I intend to send in a few days. I have two or three barrels of flour which I only wait an opportunity of sending you. I wish I knew what you were most in want of that I might provide and send it. The Jersey Line having revolted, we have just returned from reducing them to obedience. The ringleaders were shot and the rest par-

doned. The flame has caught the New York troops who now refuse to do duty; and I fear our own will follow the example unless some money is soon sent on. I have not had a farthing this month nor do I expect any. I have subjoined a copy of the General Orders (given above) on the subject of our late enterprise. We lost one ensign, one sergeant and ten rank and file killed; one captain and ten rank and file wounded, and six are missing. We killed about thirty and took fifty-four prisoners. I shall be happy to hear of your welfare at every opportunity.

Camp Highlands, January 30, 1781, General Parsons writes to Governor Trumbull as to his authority to call upon the State troops at Horseneck in case of necessity:—

Sir.—As we may have frequent occasion to call on the troops at Horseneck, I should beg your Excellency to inform me how far we have a right to call on those troops when needed. I am induced to make this request from the conduct of Colonel Mead in the late enterprise made to Morrisania. I ordered him with the troops under his command to take post at Mamaroneck bridge the morning we made the attack on the enemy, that in case we had failed and been under the necessity of retreating, we might have been sure of a body of fresh troops at this important pass to sustain us. This pass with eighty or one hundred fresh men might have been defended against a much superior force and perhaps saved the whole detachment; but Colonel Mead for reasons I have not been informed of, declined complying with the order. Although we were in no want of his aid as events happened, yet I would wish to know whether those troops may be called upon on similar occasions, as their aid may become important.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. Sam. H. Parsons.

Sunday morning, February 10th, General Parsons wrote to General Heath:—

Dear Sir.—Seven recruits for the war and three years, arrived from Connecticut last night, not one of whom is fit for service. As the State have adopted their own mode of mustering their levies, I am at a loss what to do with them. If severe measures are not taken to prevent this evil, the impositions will be so very numerous that little good will result from an attempt to fill the army. As these are

the first recruits which have arrived, and the Assembly is sitting this week, I have thought of sending them under the care of an officer to Hartford to the Assembly with the reasons for their discharge and procure an order to the town to furnish other men. I wish your directions on the subject and am, with much esteem,

Yr. Ob'dt. Servt.,

To Major General Heath. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Upon which General Heath wrote to General Washington:—

CAMP, *February 18, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Enclosed is a letter this day received from Major General Parsons. I have advised sending back such of the recruits mentioned as are manifestly unfit for service; but something further seems necessary to be done effectually to prevent such impositions in the future.

In reply to this General Washington wrote to General Heath:—

SIR.—General Parsons' proposition of sending the recruits immediately back to the Assembly now sitting at Hartford, I think a very good one, because it will serve to point out to the Legislature the impositions that will inevitably be put upon the public if any but military men are to be judges of the sufficiency of recruits. But to avoid the expense and trouble of bringing such trash to the army and sending them back, I think it highly necessary that a field officer should attend each place of rendezvous, whose business it shall be to inspect each recruit, and should there be any defect in him, return him immediately to the town from whence he came. General Parsons will know who are convenient to the rendezvous and he may appoint accordingly.

Danbury, February 22, 1781, General Parsons wrote to Governor Trumbull:—

SIR.— . . . The names of the recruits sent from Lyme and the reasons why they are not received, are enclosed in a letter to your Excellency of the 19th with the inspector's representation; lest that should not arrive in time, I have enclosed another and shall send the field officers mentioned in his Excellency's direction to General Heath to Wethersfield, Norwich, New Haven, Litchfield and

Danbury, unless your Excellency shall please to appoint other places of rendezvous and notice me of your orders on that head. The recruiting orders his Excellency, the General, has directed forbid our receiving any person who is not an inhabitant of this State; all of whose attachment to the cause of the country there are any reasons to doubt; all under sixteen or over fifty years of age; all lame or infirm persons and all whose size and strength do not appear sufficient to discharge all the duties of a soldier. The recruits rejected and sent back will wait on your Excellency under the conduct of an officer.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Camp, February 7, 1781, Colonel Samuel B. Webb writes to General Parsons as to the condition of some of his men:—

DEAR GENERAL.—Enclosed you have a list of eight men who are naked and quite a burden to the regiment. I mean, if I have your approbation, to discharge them to-morrow. The bearer, Asa Leonard, waits on you in his Sunday-go-to-meeting dress. His term not expiring till the 7th of May, I cannot discharge him without your orders.

If you will be so obliging as to lend me a gallon of spirits and a few potatoes, I will see to repay you soon.

I am, dear General, Aff. yours,

S. B. WEBB.

[Endorsed.] *February 7, 1781.*

General Parsons' compliments to Colonel Webb, informing him he is of opinion the service will be benefitted by discharging all the men named within, the bearer included. The spirits &c. are at Colonel Webb's service when he sends for them.

March 5, 1781, General Parsons writes to H. Bissell, Esq., of Windham, Conn.:—

SIR.—I am honored with the letter of the recruiting committee of Windham of the 14th ult. and in answer must inform that Body that we have no representation in the Legislature and therefore cannot be supposed to know what has passed in that assembly, but from their letter I feared some delay might be occasioned in furnishing the quota of Windham unless an examination was immediately

made of the matters referred to in their letter. I have, therefore, examined the case of all the names mentioned in their letter and the answers you will find against their names. As the town of Windham has always vied with the foremost in maintaining the war, I have not hesitated to take upon me to remove every obstacle in their way to furnishing their full quota of recruits, that they may not forfeit the character they have assumed of being behind none in the present contest. I am obliged to say many towns are rather desirous of throwing off the burthen rather than performing their duty. I wish not to see the town of Windham in this class.

I am &c.,

To H. Bissell, Windham. SAM. H. PARSONS.

The following is from President Dwight, who was chaplain of Parsons' brigade, when he commanded at West Point in 1777:—

NORTHAMPTON, *Feb 28, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I suspect Parson Baldwin has not only taken my place in the Army but in your affections; I have written you several letters and have received no answer, not even a verbal one.

This is merely to beg a favor of you, and therefore I claim no credit for it. I left a small bundle of clothes with your baggage which I have since heard are lodged at Redding. If without any trouble you could forward them by a safe conveyance to Hartford to Colonel Wadsworth, it would be a particular obligation to me.

I remain as I was, only grown twenty years older than I was when I left you. Toil and anxiety bring a man down faster than his proportion.

With the greatest esteem and affection,

Your most obedient friend & servant,

To General Parsons. TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

Washington having been informed by General Parsons' Aid-de-Camp, Captain Joseph Walker, whose home was in Stratford, Connecticut, that dangerous plans and combinations were being formed among the Tories of Fairfield County, wrote to General Parsons as follows:—

HEADQUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, *February 22, 1781.*

SIR.—Captain Walker has communicated to me some discoveries made of a plot among the Tories of Stratford and Fairfield County, of which I have directed him to give you the particulars. It seems

a clue has been found to it, which, if rightly improved, will enable us to detect the affair in all its extent, and punish the principals and their accomplices. I need not observe to you of how dangerous a tendency combinations of this nature are, nor of how much importance it is to put an effectual stop to them. Your knowledge of the country and characters of the people will enable you best to conduct the investigation; and as you live in one of the counties where it seems to originate, you may do it with the less risk of suspicion.

I am therefore to request, that you will undertake the affair in the manner you think most likely to succeed, and will set about it immediately. You may want a party of men when you have matured the discovery, to seize the persons concerned. These you may take from the Connecticut Line, as a guard to the part of the country where they will be necessary. The two points most essential will be, to detect any characters of importance who may be concerned in it, and if possible to get into our hands the register of the associators' names. The person who will serve you as a spy, must be assured of some generous compensation, such as will be an object to his family and secure his fidelity. This I leave to your management.

I am with great regard, Sir,
Yr. most obt. servt.,
G. WASHINGTON.

To Major General Parsons.
Redding, Conn.

Two days after upon his return to camp, Parsons wrote General Washington:—

CONNECTICUT HUTS, *February 24, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I left my hut last Tuesday to visit the Rhode Island troops and, with General Heath's permission, to make a small excursion to see my family, which was twenty-five miles east of the line of troops, on condition I was to be again at quarters to-day. I understood on my return, that Captain Walker had gone eastward with your Excellency's commands for me. I have not seen him. If anything of importance to be immediately executed is contained in those instructions, I shall be much obliged by receiving a duplicate of them by the bearer.

I am Sir with greatest respect
Yr. Ob'dt. Servt.,
SAM. H. PARSONS.

To General Washington.

To this Washington replied:—

HEADQUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, *February 27, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—I have received your favor of the 24th. Enclosed is a copy of my letter of the 22d by Captain Walker. Should you not have seen him, you will be pleased to proceed after him, that no time may be lost in the investigation of the important matter he will communicate to you, and in which I hope you may have the fullest success.

I am &c.,

To Major General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

Parsons answering the same day, says:—

CAMP, *February 27, 1781, 6 o'clock P. M.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I this moment received your favor of this date. Capt. Walker has not returned, nor have I heard from him. I shall go eastward at gun-firing in the morning. I think it a probable measure to effect the proposed discovery, to send a person of address and good sense as well as art, to New York, to propose some way by which friends to government (as they call the Tories) may register their names without exposing themselves to danger on leaving their estates. It may be best he should take a list of names who would wish to be reconciled to their government. This may be going on whilst I am pursuing other measures for detecting them. At present I believe I shall try this measure unless I am forbid by your Excellency.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Soon after reaching Redding, General Parsons writes to the Governor as follows:—

REDDING, *March 3, 1781.*

SIR.—I arrived from Camp the day before yesterday by special command of the General. I am happy to hear there is some probability of a donation to our old soldiers and some money to relieve the present wants of our officers. The objects of my command from the General are nearly pointed out to your Excellency in a letter from the Rev'd. Mr. Rexford to you, which you have undoubtedly received. I am convinced by the information I received yesterday, that the association of the disaffected party is very extensive and is daily gathering strength; that a register of them is kept in the State and the mode of conforming to the British Government on the terms of the last proclamation is also directed by General Clinton; that

regular channels of conveying dispatches through the States and to and from Canada for the enemy, are settled and their stages as certain as those of post-riders. I am able to find the place at which they are delivered on the shore and two other stages at which they stop and are again forwarded on. What I most wish is to possess myself of the register and seize some principal characters, who do more mischief from their secret advice and direction than others by their open violation of the law. A general collection of provisions for the use of the enemy and furnishing them under various pretences, purchasing all the fat cattle in their power, seems to be part of their object; discrediting and depreciating the currency of the country by counterfeiting and other means; prohibiting French currency in New York and coining counterfeit guineas to be ushered into the country; to embarrass and perplex our affairs by intimidating the weak, encouraging the wicked and enhancing the ideas of expense and misapplications of moneys, seem to be a system the disaffected are agents for carrying into execution. Enlisting troops for the enemy under Arnold's proclamation goes on with considerable success, and I believe a very short time will carry off a great proportion of the young men to the enemy. I know considerable numbers are now preparing to go off. A Lieut. Colonel and about twenty men were last night within about three miles of my quarters, and the Tories in general have assurances of the enemy's making a descent to favor them between this time and the first of May, at which time the associators are to take arms and spread desolation through the country, and furnish the supplies of provisions on hand and join the enemy in their operations. These are the firm expectations of the Tories. Whether any such design exists in New York or whether 'tis an encouragement to their greater exertions at present and to cheer their spirits until they can draw their men and supplies to New York, I am uncertain. I have sent into New York. On the return of my messenger, I hope to be more satisfied. . The spies upon the disaffected and who are fully in their confidence, can by no means consent to be discovered, which may exceedingly embarrass any future proceedings. This state of facts without a comment, will convince your Excellency of the difficulties attending the discovery, or detecting the plot in its extent and preventing the intended execution of it. To inflict pecuniary penalties and suffer the criminals to continue near our lines, serves only to make them more cautious but not less mischievous. To apprehend and attempt to punish by civil process, will in this case be of no effect, because we cannot develop the witnesses, and the most pernicious characters are probably those against whom no direct proof can be had. To apprehend indis-

criminately by military force all those concerned, I do not feel myself at liberty to do without further authority than I have at present, especially as some small essay of that kind was made last summer and involved me in the most illiberal slander of men of different ranks, from the magistrate to the peasant. To attempt to procure a law of the kind upon the present exciting emergency, is but defeating a possibility of success in detecting it. . . . . What then is to be done? Can anything more be done than to become spectators of our destruction without using any measures to prevent it, or at least any which will promise success. I have written this for your Excellency's consideration. I shall set out to see you next Tuesday and by Thursday intend to be at Hartford, when I hope you will be prepared to give me your directions, as I cannot make any long stay at that place. I must entreat your Excellency not to develop any part of this information to your Council or any other persons.

I am, Sir, with great esteem and respect

Yr. obt. servt.

To Governor Trumbull. SAM. H. PARSONS.

March 13, 1781, General Parsons writes to Governor Trumbull in respect to examinations of accused persons, taken at the direction of the Council, copies of which he incloses:—

DEAR SIR.—In pursuance of the directions of the Council, I have taken the enclosed examinations by which you will have some little idea of the extensiveness of those concerned in supplying the enemy and of illicit commerce. I find it convenient, and perhaps as necessary, to extend my inquiries to the commerce by water as by land, and to both, as well as the particular object of your recommendation, but when I view the list of the inhabitants of Greenwich, Stamford and Norwalk, which has appeared in the course of two days on the examination of four men, to be concerned, I own myself alarmed. The inclosed list contains forty-seven who are now at home, who, by the accusations of the examinants, appear to be concerned in these pernicious practices. How many more will appear on further examination is uncertain, probably a great number. By perusing the examinations you will find some are accused on report only, some from personal knowledge. Add to these the scene which I expect will open at New Haven (unless the escape of a prisoner now taken should prevent), and the numbers who will appear in pursuing the particular objects of my inquiry, and it gives me a most horrid prospect. The Act of Government to try by Court Martial I have

not received. I must entreat your Excellency to forward that Act, and also the advice of your Council how far it is expedient for me to proceed in apprehending the persons named in the inclosed evidence. I shall impatiently wait your answer, as the end may be defeated by delay, and I shall be unhappy to be considered the faulty cause. I have detained the examinant until I have your answer.

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAM. H. PARSONS.

The inclosed list of accused contains the names of six persons from Norwalk, eight from Stamford, twelve from Stanwich, seventeen from Greenwich besides several in prison, all charged with supplying the enemy with provisions and aiding them in their incursions into the country. The following is a copy of the testimony taken March 10 at Stamford, upon one of the examinations inclosed in the foregoing letter, and furnishes an interesting exposition of the condition of affairs in Fairfield County inquired into by General Parsons:—

Andrew Bennett of Green's Farms, says; he was taken last Sunday at Green's Farms on suspicion of corresponding with the enemy and carrying on treasonable practices &c., and says he went the latter end of last December with Captain John Friend in a commissioned boat to Lloyd's Neck, the company, John Friend, George Friend, Abraham Scrivener, Jonathan Scrivener, Moses Scrivener, Thomas Taylor and himself.

John Friend went to Colonel Hewlet or Ludlow and got permission to bring off a quantity of goods, and took at James Ketchum's store about 300 pounds value, and brought them off under permission. No man went on shore but John Friend. The goods were landed at Saugatuck River in the bushes. The goods belonged to the Friends, Scriveners and Jabez Adams.

Phineas Hanford, Jun. and Nathan Hanford, in January last sent fowls, mutton, beef, turkies, pigs &c. by Friend's boat and other boats to Long Island to exchange for goods, which were brought back to them. George Mosier and James Cable assisted in taking the articles on board.

Mat. Sherwood, Andrew Morehouse, Michael Morehouse, Albert Stewart, in February, put provisions on board of a boat for Long Island, which was taken and the men confined. Jos. Guire of Redding, has had a quantity of goods from Long Island, which he had

of Gideon Gray, which were brought to Compo in a British boat for Gray.

Daniel Dan, who married Colonel Webb's daughter, told him he had put 150 barrels of flour in a barn near the water in Stamford, which was to be cleared for Newport but was designed for Long Island. The flour is under the straw. The barn is on the east side the River. Dan has since joined the enemy.

One Reed of Canaan secreted Jos. Hoyt in his house in January last, until he cut out a sloop from Saugatuck River. One Weed, a shoemaker, who married Fairweather's daughter, piloted Hoyt from Reeds to Saugatuck. This information he had from Reed and Weed. George Friend secreted Osborn and Judson last February. John Friend concealed Saml. Osborn.

One Waring, a lame man, in Stamford, knows who carries provisions and who brings goods, and where they are landed, and has been himself concerned in the matter. Ebenezer Gorham of Green's Farms, told me if I turned evidence, they would kill me.

Jonathan Scrivener informed him that a party was to land before Wm. Raymond's door at Little Island with about one hundred men and designed to plunder Captain Nash and burn his house, and he expected from the conversation it would have been done by this time.

And so on implicating many parties.

Hartford, March 16, 1781, Governor Trumbull replies to General Parsons' letter of the 13th in reference to the Acts of the Assembly providing for Courts Martial:—

Sir.—Your favor of the 13th inst. is just come to hand. I immediately convened my Council. Colonel Dyer informs me he had already inclosed to you the two Acts of Assembly passed this session.

The one which confines the jurisdiction of a Court Martial, or (as it is expressed) the exercise of their jurisdiction, to the town of Greenwich, which includes in it all crimes which would properly be the subject of your inquiry.

The other Act which gives a Court Martial an extensive jurisdiction through the State, but seems to confine the jurisdiction to a species of crimes committed by persons who have joined, or who shall hereafter join, the enemies of this State or put themselves under the power and protection of the said enemies who shall come into this State and rob and plunder &c., and who have voluntarily

put themselves under the power and protection of the enemies for a day or an hour or how long is not limited by the law.

Of these laws and the subjects of them will be for you to judge and determine, and how far they may be extended for the public good and to prevent the mischief designed. We cannot but esteem ourselves obliged to you for your care and attention, and hope you will proceed as far as your powers and the public good will induce and permit, and you may depend on every support while you make them your object.

I am with esteem and regard, Sir,
Your obedient and humble servant
JON'TH TRUMBULL.

Honorable Maj. General Parsons.

Redding March 16, 1781, General Parsons writes to Mr. Burr:—

DEAR SIR.—I am sorry a necessity existed to apprehend the persons named by Bennett at this particular time, as this information stands so nearly connected with another more extensive and more important transaction, the opening which to view I fear will be impeded by it. But since 'tis found necessary, I should wish (if the civil magistrate is willing) to examine them, and when I find they are apprehended and where they are confined, I will take measures for the purpose.

I am &c.,
To Mr. Burr. SAM. H. PARSONS.

After continuing for two weeks his investigations in Fairfield County and disclosing a condition of affairs most unexpected and alarming, General Parsons reports to General Washington the situation as follows:—

REDDING, *March 14, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—In consequence of your Excellency's directions, I have to this time been pursuing the object of the inquiry you have ordered, but have not been able to make the discoveries wished for or with a sufficient degree of precision to make any attempt to seize the persons concerned. I believe it is certain that an association is formed to submit to the British Government on the terms of the last proclamation; that the number of associators is daily increasing; that their names are transmitted to New York as often as opportunity presents; that a register of them was kept in New-

town, but 'tis not certain this register is now there or can be found if there; that a mode of conforming different from that pointed out in the proclamation is adopted; that many persons are engaged in the service of the enemy who are preparing to join them; about forty have made attempts since I have been there, but were disappointed; persons are engaged to enlist these men and are in the pay of the enemy and promised commissions. Regular stages of intelligence are established from the shores through the country to Canada. Dispatches have lately gone through those channels to Vermont, but I think it will be exceedingly difficult to detect the plan in its extent. So much caution is used by them that my prospects are small of obtaining the register or exposing to punishment any character of importance. Some of their recruiting officers, some of the recruits, pilots, concealers of the enemy and conveyers of dispatches may be taken. In the course of my inquiries I have been informed of a great number in Horseneck, Stamford and Norwalk, who are suppliers of provisions to the enemy, who conceal them when they make their excursions from Morrisania and Long Island, and who keep up a correspondence and trade with the Post at Lloyd's Neck. About forty of these I know who are now at home and pursuing the same courses and may be taken up; and I believe this is not a quarter part of those who are concerned, and, upon inquiry, may be exposed. By these pernicious practices the morals of most of the young men in those towns have been dissipated and a thirst for plunder and money has induced them to courses which have eventually driven many of them to the enemy, so that it has become difficult to know what is best to be done in those towns. To make the inquiry thorough, and take up all concerned, will drive great numbers to the enemy, and to omit it will put the few well affected, who now remain there, wholly in the power of the enemy, notwithstanding every effort we can make to protect them. Whether it is best to apprehend all of them, or let them all remain, or to select out some who are most criminal and punish them in the most exemplary manner without disclosing the names of the other persons concerned, and try what effect that may have, are doubts which I am unable to resolve. The same questions will arise respecting the associators, pilots, conveyors of intelligence &c. In short, the evil has taken so deep root, 'tis become a subject of a very delicate nature and difficult to know how far 'tis best to extend the inquiries. The State has passed a law subjecting those persons coming into the State to plunder, and those who aid, assist or in any way abet their measures, to trial by Court Martial, declaring those people not exchangeable and inflicting capital or other discretionary punish-

ment upon them. I must request your Excellency's particular directions how far I shall proceed in these matters, and what I shall do with the offenders when apprehended. A temporary check may be given to the intentions of the disaffected by seizing a number of them at present, but no radical remedy is yet in my power.

I am persuaded they expect a descent on the coast in April to favor their designs of joining the enemy and furnishing supplies to them. What probability there is of the event taking place, you must be much better informed of. The spy employed amongst them has assurances of generous pay for all the time he employs and expenses incurred in this service; of a handsome gratuity when he has done what he can, to be settled in some more secure place; if he is detected and obliged to fly from his present settlement, (which will be the case if he is discovered), and if he succeeds in discovering the full extent of the plan so that those concerned may be detected, and it shall prove to be as extensive as is supposed, he shall be gratified with an annuity of one hundred dollars per annum for life as a reward for his services. I believe him faithful and industrious in making the discoveries necessary. If you think it best to delay taking up any of those concerned until further discoveries are made, I think it will be best for me to return to Camp, leaving Captain Walker to prosecute the inquiries, lest my continuing here should occasion jealousies. I can return again when everything is prepared for execution.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

There are good reasons for supposing that the spy employed in this investigation was no other than William Heron of Redding. Parsons, whose home was there, knew him well and often used him to obtain information of the enemy's plans and intentions, as was well known. On the evening of the 27th of February, the day he received his orders from Washington to proceed to Fairfield County, Parsons wrote the General that it would probably assist in making the proposed discoveries, "to send a person of address and good sense, as well as art, to New York, and that he believed he should try this measure unless forbidden by his Excellency." These qualities, as we shall hereafter see, were pre-eminently characteristic of Heron, so much so that he must have been the person Parsons had in mind when he wrote. As this letter was written during the evening of the

27th, and Parsons left camp at gun-firing the next morning, (the 28th, and that year the last day of the month), arriving at Redding March 1, he could not well have executed his purpose while on the road, but must have done so that day or the next after reaching his and Heron's home; for in writing to Governor Trumbull on the third, after speaking of the expectation of the Tories that a descent in their favor would soon be made by the enemy and his uncertainty as to whether any such design was entertained in New York, he said, "I have sent into New York. On the return of my messenger, I hope to be more satisfied." A few days later we find Heron in New York. The British Secret Service Record discloses the fact that he was there —a pretended loyalist—on May 11, where he had been doubtless for some days, his "address, good sense and art" standing him in great stead. These facts point to Heron and to no one else and raise a strong presumption, if nothing more, that William Heron was the spy Parsons sent to New York.

Thomas Taylor of Norwalk, charged with aiding the enemy, and included in the list inclosed in Parsons' letter of the 13th to Trumbull, had been arrested and ordered to appear before the General at Danbury the 20th. The magistrates and selectmen of Norwalk and twenty-six citizens vouched for by them as friends of Independence, joined in a letter to General Parsons representing that Taylor had always been a faithful friend of the country in whom they had the greatest confidence, and that he could not have been guilty of the offence charged unless misled by designing persons, and asking that his shortcomings, if any, be overlooked; and that, "if he should be otherwise dealt with, we are apprehensive we shall in some measure lose his assistance, and can assure your Honor that we have need of all we can save to ourselves, as friendly men hereabouts are very scarce."

To this General Parsons replied as follows:—

REDDING, *March 21, 1781.*

GENTLEMEN.—I received a letter addressed to me, signed by the civil authority and selectmen and a number of other gentlemen of Norwalk, said to be very respectable characters, relating to Thomas

Taylor who was taken up and brought to me for practices of which he is accused contrary to the interest of the country.

I ever have paid, and I hope I shall continue to pay, a respect to every character in office, but when I have clear and convincing proof against a man that he has repeatedly been guilty of offences highly injurious to the interests of the country, and the only motive to show him favor is, that he will not transgress again, I cannot see it to be my duty to pass over his sins in silence, unless he will make amends by freely disclosing the evil practices of others, perhaps of more consequence than himself; nor do I see a sufficient reason for a true friend to his country to wish this knowledge to be suppressed. I will never accuse any man of being guilty of transgressing the law in so secret a manner that no person can detect or find him out, though such informations have been made with great assurance, but I certainly will use every method in my power to bring to light any practice pernicious to the country, and when I procure evidence I will subject the accused to trial. I shall be happy to find Mr. Taylor disposed to free himself from punishment, but if he chooses to take that on himself which he ought to lay upon others, he must have his choice.

I am, gentlemen &c.,

To the Selectmen of Norwalk. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Redding, March 23, 1781, General Parsons not having received a reply to his letter of the 14th, again writes to General Washington:—

DEAR SIR.—Agreeably to your Excellency's orders, I have attended to the business with which I was charged and have been through various parts of the State where I judged the most essential service might be rendered. I have succeeded in some measure, but being seized a few days ago with a fever, am at present unable to stir abroad. I hope in a short time to be able to attend to my duty where your Excellency shall direct; would wish it may be at Camp if that is best. Should be happy to know your Excellency's pleasure on this head; likewise to be favored with an answer to my long letter addressed to your Excellency when absent on your tour to the eastward.

March 26, 1781. P. S. After writing the above, I received your Excellency's letter of the 23d inst., observed its contents, but not able to answer it in full. I have matters of importance to communicate to your Excellency, which I will do as soon as my health

will admit. At present I am not able to stir from my bed without help. I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

Redding, March 26, 1781, General Parsons' Aid-de-Camp, Oliver Lawrence, writes to Colonel Gray in reference to the disposition of flour captured by his troops, and says:—"I refer the whole matter to you as the General is so very unwell, and is not able to do any business whatsoever."

The following is Washington's reply to Parsons' letter of the 14th, referred to in the postscript to the preceding letter:—

HEADQUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, *23rd March, 1781.*

DEAR SIR:—Your letter of the 14th, instant was forwarded to me in my absence from this place, [he was absent nineteen days having left camp for Newport the 2nd] and met me on my return, since which this is the first leisure moment that I have had to attend to its contents.

I am sorry to find the evil so deeply rooted, and that the defection is still gaining ground. From its extensive nature and pernicious tendency, I think every measure which policy and precaution can dictate ought immediately to be adopted to put a final stop to this illicit and treasonable intercourse. For this purpose it will be well to consult the Governor on the subject, who himself, or his Council, will be best able to advise (upon your representation) whether it is expedient to apprehend all the characters you mention, or let them all remain for the present, or to select some of the most criminal and punish them in an exemplary manner, without disclosing the names of the other persons concerned. In the meantime the joint efforts of the civil and military should co-operate and harmonize in defeating the machinations of the enemy. It has been hinted that agents have been employed for these purposes by your government; if so, these men and your emissaries might give and receive mutual aid; at least they must be prevented from thwarting each other. When matters are ripe for execution, I would yield the necessary military assistance; until then the greatest secrecy will be necessary.

If the man employed by you should prosecute his discoveries to effect upon as large a scale as you intimate, he will be entitled to the rewards proposed. It will be at your option, after having made the proper arrangements in this affair, to return to the army when you shall judge your presence in the State not absolutely necessary.

I am with great regard &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

Danbury, March 30, 1781, Captain Joseph Walker, Aid-de-Camp to General Parsons, writes to General Washington:—

I am sorry to inform you that Major General Parsons is so reduced by his illness and at times so far deprived of his reason, as makes it impossible for him to transact the business which your Excellency expected. In the first of his illness he referred the whole business to me in hopes at that time of being able to attend himself in a few days, but I fear he will not this several weeks.

A number of persons have been apprehended since the General wrote your Excellency, and are now in confinement at this place, some concerned in the illicit trade, some taken at Greenwich coming from the enemy plundering, others concerned in the combination which is forming in this County, and some of the last mentioned characters are capital villains, having been enlisting men for the British service, secreting persons coming from and going to the enemy; also conveying dispatches from the enemy to Canada and from thence back to New York, all which I hope we may be able to make appear.

The person employed by the General is faithful and attentive, and I flatter myself will make further discoveries of importance; at present shall extend our seizing persons no farther than is absolutely necessary to prevent their escape and prevent any delay in finding out the grand plan. I would wish to know your Excellency's pleasure concerning those already apprehended and what is best farther to be done upon the business.

April 4, Major Wyllys writes to Colonel Webb, "that General Parsons lies on a sick-bed at Redding, we fear dangerously ill, which is very unfortunate for us. His non-arrival in camp occasions delay in the work."

Elisha Rexford, the same person mentioned in Parson's letter of March 3 to Trumbull, writes to the Governor, April 4, in reference to the investigation being made of the conduct of the Tories:—

NEW HAVEN, *April 4th, 1781.*

SIR.—Since I had the honor of writing your Excellency February 25th, I have given every attention compatible with my station in life (that of clergyman), to find out the designs of the Tories, their combinations, plots &c., and have been favored with some success, and if affairs can be conducted upon a right line, apprehend much greater discoveries might be made.

General Parsons informed me that he had obtained ample powers

in order to search, apprehend, try and punish, which opened up fine prospects, but Providence has frowned in the General's sickness and, not only so, but I have been much disheartened by the very narrow limits allowed to Courts Martial by the General Assembly in their last session. If anything can be done to good effect, it must be done by martial law; so much is evident to me from the attention which I have given to the subject, and much might be hoped for in this way with proper regulations. If affairs must now be taken back to be conducted in a Court of Civil Law, all hope is at an end. I give up all further discoveries as gone, and shall not think it worth while to take any more pains about the matter, to consume time or expose life for nothing, for I am well aware of the resentment of these people, espcially by information from Mr. M.

The apprehending of some few of the Tories to be tried by martial law has much deranged their affairs. One Tory said to Mr. M. that if matters were rightly managed by the Whigs, all would come out and their whole scheme broken up and frustrated. They dread to have examinations of individuals take place, especially by General Parsons or a Court Martial. Whig people our way highly approve of what General Parsons has done, and say this is the way to manage the disaffected to frustrate their schemes and save the country.

The Tories wish to have all these matters in the Civil Law, and make their boast that there is but little danger there. 'Tis very observable that conscious guilt has much appeared since a few have been taken into custody. Mr. M. tells me of some that have left their houses and lurked about two, three and four days, or, if at home, have kept a good lookout. He has been advised to take care of himself and be ready to push off. . . .

I am &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. ELISHA REXFORD.

P. S. Captain Walker can inform your Excellency in many particulars respecting these matters, and has some minutes of the conduct of some particular Tories, which were obtained from Mr. M.

A General Court Martial is ordered to be held at Danbury the 9th instant to try Samuel Hoit and such other persons as shall be brought before them. Colonel Gray will collect officers for that purpose. The senior officers will preside.

By order of Major General Parsons,

O. LAWRENCE, A. D. Camp.

Given at Redding, April 7, 1781.

Proceedings of a General Court-Martial held by order of Major General Parsons.

DANBURY, *April 13, 1781.*

Samuel Hoit, an inhabitant of the town of Stamford in the State of Connecticut, being tried by a General Court Martial whereof Lieut. Colonel Gray is President, on a charge of joining the enemy and robbing and plundering the peaceable inhabitants of the State, is found guilty of the charges and sentenced by the Court to receive thirty-nine lashes on the naked body and be confined in Newgate Prison during the present war. Major General Parsons approves the sentence of the Court, and orders it put in execution at guard mounting to-morrow morning, and that he be confined until he can be sent to Newgate.

Richard Wares, a soldier, was tried by the same Court for enlisting twice and taking two bounties, and was sentenced to receive one hundred lashes. The sentence of the Court is approved and ordered to be carried into execution at guard mounting to-morrow morning.

By order of Major General Parsons,

O. LAWRENCE, A. D. Camp.

April 9, Parsons writes to his correspondent, "please to present my compliments to your fellow prisoners, and to that obstinate Tory, Parson Walter, my old friend."

Redding, April 20, 1781, General Parsons writes to General Washington repecting his health and affairs in Connecticut, and advises an expedition against Lloyd's Neck, which he would wish to command:—

DEAR GENERAL.—It is now five days since I have first walked from my bed to the fire. I have recovered as fast as I have any right to expect since that time, but still continue very weak. I hope the first pleasant day to go abroad, and when I gain strength sufficient to ride, I hope a journey will restore my strength as well as health. I am at present unable to attend to the business you committed to my charge. Captain Walker will take charge of those matters and doubtless communicate to your Excellency what he finds important. I can only say that the steps taken in that affair, seem to have brought the operations of the disaffected to a stand; at present they seem to be waiting events. I cannot but wish your Excellency, in the absence of the British Fleet, to order an expedition to Lloyd's Neck. Two frigates would be sufficient to cover the operations and five hundred men will be quite sufficient to render

the attempt successful. These with the ships can perhaps be ordered from Rhode Island where no jealousy will be occasioned by the movements. This expedition, if successful, will give peace to our coast the whole summer, and in that point of light will be important and very grateful to the country. If your Excellency should order this expedition, I think I have many reasons to claim to command it, and must beg your Excellency not to deny me; but, if any reasons should induce you to order any other officer to command, I must beg your permission to go with the expedition, in command or not, as you see fit. I am dear General

Your obdt. humble servt.

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To His Excellency General Washington, Headquarters.

To this General Washington replied:—

HEADQUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, *April 30, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 20th instant, and am glad to find by it that you are in a fair way of recovering your health again, and that the measures you had taken previous to your illness have been attended with some degree of success. As soon as circumstances will possibly admit, I wish the detachment of Continental troops at Danbury may be sent back to the Army. The Quartermaster General having it in contemplation to have a considerable quantity of provisions brought on at once from Danbury to Peekskill, it will be well to make use of these troops as an escort for it, and to give the commanding officer directions to afford his aid and assistance in every possible way to facilitate the transportation.

There are insuperable obstacles which will at present prevent an attempt to carry into execution the enterprise you have suggested. It may, however, be expedient to keep even the prospect a secret.

I am, dear Sir, &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

Redding, April 30, 1781, General Parsons writes to General Washington as to his health and the condition of affairs in Fairfield County:—

DEAR GENERAL.—The fever by which I have been confined has left me exceedingly weak and unable to attend to any business of importance, nor do I expect to recover my strength soon unless a

journey to which I am advised, shall restore me. I hope to be able to join the Army by the forepart of June, but have no expectation of being sooner able to do my duty there. Two severe fevers in six months are very forceable proofs of a ruined constitution, and reasons of great weight with me to pay more attention to my health than a camp life will admit of. If I find I can go through the fatigues of another campaign, which I most ardently desire, I shall join the Army; but should the state of my health prevent my joining before the campaign opens, I must resign.

I believe very little more progress can be made in the matters committed to my conduct at present. Capt. Walker will be able to inform you on the subject. A considerable check is put to the proceedings of the disaffected in this quarter, but no radical cure is affected. I find a report is confidentially circulated among them that the British Government have given assurances to Col. Allen that the State of Vermont shall be made a separate province, if the war terminates in their favor, and that he shall be appointed Governor of the new province. . . . I do not wholly despair of possessing myself of a register of names who have conformed to British Government. I have proofs of the existence of such registers by those who have seen one of them, the keeper of which is now under guard, but the register was not to be found. . . .

I herewith transmit you the proceedings of a court martial on the trial of Uriah Rowland. I do not consider myself to have any authority to approve a sentence in a capital case; I do not suppose myself a General Officer commanding in this State within the meaning of the act of Congress, being here for a special purpose only, and without troops to command, and I believe the act giving power to a General Officer commanding in any State was repealed at the time when Congress reassumed the power of pardoning offenders. There is also a relation between the prisoners family and mine which is a prudential reason for being excused if I have a right. He has served three or four years in the army as a non-commissioned officer with good reputation; is about 24 years of age, as brave and intrepid as any man; has many qualities which might render him a very useful man. Since he has been over to the enemy, he has been very active in their service and has done much mischief. He says he was induced to bring over some goods from Long Island which he received in payment of a debt from a man who had joined them, and being discovered, he fled to the enemy, but says he has always retained sentiments friendly to the country.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

May 2, 1781, Parsons writes General Washington advising him of information received the day before, believed to have been brought by William Heron from New York, where he was the 25th, having just reached his home in Redding:—

DEAR GENERAL,—By intelligence from New York as late as Saturday (April 28th), which I have every reason to believe, General Arnold was every day expected there to take command of an expedition. Admiral Arbuthnot is going to England, his officers refusing to serve with him since the action with the French fleet. His baggage was landed. Admiral Graves, who commanded the fleet, was in New York on Saturday, but expected to sail in a few days. Five ships of the line were in the East River, the rest in the North River and below. The fleet with the provisions had arrived without loss. The enemy appear in high spirits and say all the money for the current year is raised; this I think probable, as Government Bills have risen there from ten per cent discount to par. Two regiments of foreigners at Jamaica are under marching orders and were paraded on Sunday morning to march. Your Excellency's letter to some person to the southward, wherein you mention the state of our Army, arms and clothing, gives great pleasure to those who know it in New York. Great dependence is placed upon the defection of Vermont; they say their measures are fully secured there, and that an army may be expected from Canada soon.

I have desired Captain Walker to receive the money due on my warrant at the Pay Office; if any order of your Excellency's should be necessary, I should be greatly obliged by your Excellency's direction to have it paid. I have received nothing for eighteen months, have expended all my own moneys and cannot even redeem my horses which the Quartermaster has pledged for the keeping last winter. I am with great esteem

Your Excellency's obedt. servt.

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

To the two preceding letters Washington replied:—

HEADQUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, *May 8, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Your letter of the 30th of April and 2d of May, together with the proceedings of the Court Martial whereof Colonel Gray was President, have been handed to me by Captain Walker.

I hope the journey you propose will have a happy tendency towards the recovery of your health, and that you will soon be

enabled to join the Army again, after your return, though I would not wish you to do it so prematurely as to endanger a relapse.

Part of the intelligence you have been so obliging to communicate, I had received through another channel, but not the whole. The intercepted letter alluded to, said to be written by me to a gentleman at the southward, I suppose must have been an official one addressed to the Speaker of the Assembly of Virginia in which our situation in many respects was pretty plainly delineated; but you may be assured that ideas were held up in that letter which were by no means grateful to the enemy, which have embarrassed them exceedingly and which will be a sufficient reason to prevent their publishing the contents of it at large to the world.

I am sorry to be forced to inform you on the subject of your pay, that there is not a farthing in the military chest except some moneys which have been sent on by particular States for the payment of the troops of their Lines, and which cannot be appropriated to any other purpose. I am, dear Sir, &c.,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. The sentence of the Court Martial is approved. The Adjutant General will transmit the warrant for execution. Such of the culprits at Danbury as are to be delivered over to the civil authority, ought to be transferred immediately. The remainder of the prisoners should be disposed of or secured in the best and most expeditious manner, that the detachment of Continental troops may be marched to the Army without delay, agreeably to my letter of the 30th ultimo.

To Major General Parsons.

Redding, May 4, 1781, Parsons replies to Washington's letter of April 30:—

DEAR GENERAL.—I was favored yesterday with your letter of the 30th of April and shall as soon as possible send the men you direct.

I find an uneasiness arises among the officers respecting the appointment of several field officers in the Light Infantry under the command of the Marquis, (Lafayette). If there shall be any alteration in that command, I would request your Excellency to appoint Lieut. Colonel Gray of the Connecticut Line, to the command of the Battalion from that Line.

Captain Hunter is now with me respecting a number of persons taken when I had a command to Westchester in January, who are not enlisted with the enemy and whom they will not exchange, six of

whom, viz: John Shaeldon, Elijah Williams, Edward Bugbee, Abraham Lent, William Ryer and Nath. Conckling, on conversation with Captain Hunter, I am satisfied it will be best to parole home, to return when called for. If your Excellency should be of that opinion, I shall wish the necessary orders to be given for the purpose.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Redding, May 8, 1781, Parsons replies to Washington's letter of May 3:—

DEAR GENERAL.—I have the honor of your Excellency's letter by Captain Walker. The detachment at Danbury shall march as soon as the Quartermaster has provided teams for transporting the provisions from Danbury, which I hope will not exceed two or three days; the prisoners which cannot be tried before they march will be sent with them to Fishkill.

Inclosed are the proceedings of a Court Martial against Beardsley, Collier and Towner, the two former as fit subjects to be made public examples as any in this region, and the other a bad man who I fear will never be better. I shall send them on with the guard.

I shall make no delay in joining the Army on my return from the eastward. I hope it will not exceed the first of June before I am at Camp.

I am, dear General, with great esteem

Yr. obt. servt.

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On May 3, Parsons orders the seizure of one Willard by a file of soldiers, and denounces him as a villain. On the 4th, he orders the execution of one Rowland and directs the prisoners to attend the execution. This is probably the Uriah Rowland of whom he speaks in his letter of April 30 to Washington, and asks to be excused from passing upon the findings of the Court-Martial because his family and that of the prisoner are connected; if so, Parsons does not appear to have shrunk from doing his duty however disagreeable and trying to his feelings it may have been.

The following letter to Colonel Webb is from the Emmet Collection in the Lenox Library:—

REDDING, *May 7, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—I had forgot to send the enclosed papers found on Baldwin; as they tend clearly to evince a design to take off either myself or some other inhabitant, and to show his forwarding the measures of the enemy, they ought to lie before the Court. When they have done with them, please to return them and also the original letter used on Collier's trial, to me. The proceedings of the Court must be sent to-night if possible; if not, carry them with you. The former will be best, because whatever sentence, you give will need an approbation and execution.

Yr. Obedt. Servt.

To Col. Samuel B. Webb, SAML. H. PARSONS.
President of Court Martial, Danbury.

In May of this year, Yale College, in recognition of distinguished services, conferred honorary degrees on both General Washington and General Parsons. Harvard College, Parsons' Alma Mater, also this year conferred upon Parsons the degree of Master of Arts. The following is Washington's acknowledgment of the degree conferred by Yale:—

NEW WINDSOR, *May 15, 1781.*

SIR.—For the honor conferred upon me by the President and Fellows of the University of Yale College by the degree of Doctorate in Laws, my warmest thanks are offered; and the polite manner in which you are pleased to request my acceptance of this distinguished mark of their favor, demands my grateful acknowledgements. That the College in which you preside may long continue a useful Seminary of Learning, and that you may be the happy instrument in the hand of Providence for raising it to honor and dignity, and making it advancive of the happiness of mankind, is the sincere wish of

Sir, Your most obedient and humble servant

G. WASHINGTON.

To the Rev'd. Ezra Stiles,
President of Yale College, New Haven.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MARCH OF THE FRENCH ARMY THROUGH CONNECTICUT. JUNCTION OF THE TWO ARMIES ON THE HUDSON. FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPT ON NEW YORK. LETTERS OF WASHINGTON, PARSONS AND TRUMBULL. RECONNAISANCE IN FORCE. ABANDONMENT OF THE SIEGE. THE ALLIES MOVE TO VIRGINIA. SURRENDER OF CORNWALLIS.

June—October, 1781

WHILE the Army was yet in the Highlands, Washington convened a Board of General Officers at his Headquarters, New Windsor, at which were present, besides the Commander-in-Chief, Major Generals Lord Stirling, Howe, Parsons, McDougall, and Brigadiers Knox, Paterson, Hand, Huntington and Duportail.

The Commander-in-Chief informed the Board that the principal reason of his calling them together was to make them acquainted with the plan of operations concerted between His Excellency, the Count de Rochambeau and himself at their late meeting at Wethersfield. He requested that they would at all times in the course of these operations, give him their advice and opinions individually without invitation or reserve, assuring them that he should ever receive them with thankfulness, and that, although circumstances or other considerations might sometimes lay him under the necessity of taking measures different from what might be proposed, he hoped that would be no impediment to their still continuing to communicate to him their ideas.

The Commander-in-Chief urged upon the Board the necessity of economizing provisions, and recommended to the Generals, particularly the Brigadiers, the necessity of inspecting the returns made by their Commissaries upon every drawing day, in order to see, that the quantity of rations drawn did not exceed the number to which the brigade was strictly entitled, assuring them that he should in future look upon them as answerable for any irregularities upon this head.

He here took occasion to state to the Board, generally, the present system of the Department of Commissaries General of Purchases and Issues, and showed them the impossibility of their being upon their present plan, a check, as was intended, upon each other, and wished the Board to take the measure into consideration and report any method which appeared to them more likely to answer the end proposed. He also desired them to take the following matters into consideration and report upon them accordingly.

1. A Plan for the regular inspection of the Magazines of Provisions, that the state of the provisions may not only be constantly known, but that the Commissaries may be called to account for any damage which may appear owing to their negligence.

2. Whether the number of issuing Posts to the northward of Virginia (agreeable to the return which will be laid before them by the Commissary General), appear to them necessary. If they do not, pointing out which, in their opinions, ought to be abolished.

3. A plan for baking for the Army drawn up by General Knox.

4. The proportion of women which ought to be allowed to any given number of men, and to whom rations shall be allowed.

5. What officers of the Staff shall be allowed to draw waiters from the Line of the Army.

6. Whether it will be safe during our advance towards New York and while we are operating against that place, to trust the Posts at Kings Ferry and West Point to the following garrisons composed of the weakliest and worst men, but who are always to remain in the Works assigned them. [Here follows a statement of the garrison of each Post, making a total of five hundred men.]

7. How soon will it be advisable to encamp the Army, and at what place will it be best to draw them together in the first instance.

On the next day the Board made a report signed by all the General Officers present at the Council, in which they say:—

Sir.—We feel ourselves much obliged to your Excellency for having communicated to us the plan of operations concerted between yourself and the Count de Rochambeau for the ensuing campaign, and in compliance with your Excellency's request, we shall, you may be assured, through the whole course of its operations, give you our opinion and advice, either collectively or individually, with that freedom and candor which the regard and

respect we bear your Excellency and a sense of duty, unite to exact of us; nor shall we be discouraged from continuing to do this, though you should deviate from the measures we may happen to recommend, as we have the highest confidence that you will be governed in this, as well as in all other cases, by the best of reasons.

As to the several matters submitted for its consideration, the Board reports, that while the present system exists, it is unable to recommend any measure which will effectually prevent abuses in the Commissary Department, but that, perhaps, the waste in provisions might be diminished by a rigid supervision of transportation and a more frequent inspection of the magazines; that it highly approves the scheme of General Knox for supplying bread to the troops, but doubts the advisability of attempting a sudden and rigid reform at present in the matter of officers' servants; that the number of women necessary to the Army is, in our opinion, one to every fifteen men.

The very capital importance of West Point to the common cause; the value of the stores deposited there, must make it a tempting object to the enemy, and will probably induce them to attempt the possession of it, should it be but weakly garrisoned. We, therefore, conceive that to secure that Post and its dependencies, not less than twelve hundred men should be appropriated to it. These we recommend to be composed of Continentals and Militia in such proportion as to your Excellency shall appear proper.

It is our opinion that the Army should take the field as immediately as circumstances will admit, and that the first position it should assume be somewhere in the vicinity of Peekskill. In regard to the time in which the militia demanded of the New England States may be brought in, we imagine it will require upon an average at least one month.

With the greatest pleasure we have obeyed your Excellency's commands in giving our opinion on the subjects referred to us; it will make us happy if, in doing this we should meet your approbation.

We are, Sir, with the greatest respect, yours &c.

To the Commander in Chief.

Headquarters, New Windsor, June 18, 1781.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Board of General Officers, the Army was now rapidly concentrated at Peekskill, where much time was devoted to perfecting their drill, discipline and soldierly bearing, in which they were instructed to take due pride in order to present a creditable appearance upon meeting the fine regiments France had sent to their aid. In Parsons' Division, battalion drills were held every afternoon from four to six o'clock. In the mornings, the troops were "to exercise in detail and practice the manual, marching and wheeling in the different times, breaking off in sections and marching, by files."

The plan concerted between the Commanders of the Allied Armies at their meeting in Wethersfield on the 22d of May, was that the Count de Rochambeau should march from Newport as early as possible and form a junction with the American Army near the Hudson River, upon which the two Armies would move down to the vicinity of New York, in order to be ready to take advantage of any opportunity afforded by the weakness of the enemy.

On the 9th of June, the French Army, between four and five thousand strong, was ordered to rendezvous at Providence. After a halt there of eight days, the march was resumed, the regiment of Bourbonnais in the van, followed at intervals of a day's march by the regiments of Deux Ponts, Soissonnais and Saintonge, encamping at Waterman's Tavern, Plainfield, Windham and Bolton in succession and arriving at Hartford on the fifth day, the 22d of June. Breaking camp on the 25th, the same order of march was followed, the troops encamping at Farmington, Baron's Tavern and Break-Neck, reaching Newtown on the 28th. The left flank during this movement, was covered by the Duke of Lauzun, who, leaving his winter quarters at Lebanon, kept as far advanced as the first division and ten or fifteen miles to the south, marching through Middletown, Wallingford, North Haven, Ripton and North Stratford, where he arrived the 28th of June. The march of the French from Providence was a continuous ovation, the country people crowding around the troops, hailing them as allies and defenders, mingling with the officers and soldiers in their encampments, listening to the music of the bands and bringing offerings of the

few luxuries which their little farms afforded. But it was very dispiriting to the American officers to see the inhabitants so ready to accept the assistance of the French and so reluctant to take up arms and fight their own battles. "The French will fight it out for us, having agreed to do so, and there is no need of our troubling ourselves about more men," was the view they took and acted on.

When Washington learned that the enemy had weakened their Posts on the upper end of New York Island by detaching a considerable force upon a foraging expedition into New Jersey, he determined to attack immediately without waiting for the proposed junction of the two armies, and, in the following letter, announced his change in plan and the reason therefor to Count de Rochambeau:—

HEADQUARTERS NEAR PEEKSKILL, *June 30, 1781.*

SIR:—The enemy, by sending a detachment into Monmouth County in Jersey to collect horses, cattle and other plunder, have so weakened their Posts upon the north end of New York Island, that a most favorable opportunity seems at this moment to present itself of possessing them by a *coup-de-main,* which, if it succeeds, will be of the utmost consequence to our future operations. I have for this reason determined to make the attempt on the night of the second of July. But as we cannot with the remainder of our force maintain the advantage should we gain it, I must entreat your Excellency to put your First Brigade under march to-morrow morning, the remaining troops to follow as quickly as possible, and endeavor to reach Bedford by the evening of the second of July; and from thence to proceed immediately towards Kingsbridge, should circumstances render it necessary. Your magazine having been established on the route by Crompond, it may be out of your power to make any deviation, but could you make it convenient, you would considerable shorten the distance by marching from Ridgebury to Salem and from thence to Bedford, leaving Crompond on your right.

There is another matter which appears to me exceedingly practicable upon the same night that we attempt the Works on York Island, and which I would wish to commit the execution of to the Duke de Lauzun, provided his Corps can be brought to a certain point in time. It is the surprise of a Corps of Light Troops under the command of Colonel DeLancey, which lies at Morrisania with-

out being covered by any Works. To effect this, the Duke must be at Bedford on the second of July by twelve o'clock, if possible, where he will be joined by Colonel Sheldon with two hundred horse and foot, and on his march from thence by about four hundred infantry (Waterbury's Corps), both officers and men perfectly acquainted with the country. . . . I must request your Excellency to send orders to the Duke this evening to continue his march to-morrow morning and to reach Bedford by the evening of the second of July, if he cannot be there by noon. In this latter case the enterprise against DeLancey must probably be laid aside and the Legion, with the First Brigade of your Army will be at hand to support the detachment upon York Island, should they succeed. I shall move down with the remainder of this Army towards Kingsbridge and shall be ready to form a junction with your Excellency below at some point which shall be hereafter agreed upon

. I am &c.,

To the Count de Rochambeau. G. WASHINGTON.

It had been Rochambeau's intention, being now nearer the enemy and in the midst of the Tory population of Fairfield County, to mass his troops at Newtown and proceed in close column towards the Hudson River, but in consequence of this letter, he pressed on to Bedford where he was joined by the Duke de Lauzun, who had been ordered up from New Stratford. In accordance with his instruction, the Duke, with Colonel Sheldon, proceeded to Clapp's in Kingstreet (about two miles north of Saw Pits). Here they were joined by General Waterbury, who had been ordered to be there by sunset on the 2d with all the men of his command he should be able to collect. The combined forces, under the command of the Duke de Lauzun, made a night march to East Chester, where they arrived on the morning of the 3d.

On the 1st of July, General Lincoln, with a detachment of eight hundred men, had been ordered to embark in boats at Teller's Point, after dark on the evening of that day, and having descended the Hudson, on the next day to reconnoiter from Fort Lee the enemy's Works on the Island, and if the prospect seemed favorable, he was to attempt to take them by surprise the following morning; if not, he was to land above Spuyten Duyvel Creek,

and marching to the high grounds in front of Kingsbridge, conceal his men and await Lauzun's attack and, if possible cut off DeLancey's retreat.

To support these detached troops, Washington broke camp at Peekskill at three o'clock on the morning of the 2d and marched with his whole army (making short rests at the Croton River and Tarrytown), reaching Valentine's Hill, four miles north of Kingsbridge, on the morning of the 3d. General Parsons, commanding the right of the first line, composed of the Connecticut and Rhode Island troops, occupied the heights immediately commanding Kingsbridge, where he was in position to intercept the enemy should they attempt to escape in that direction.

General Lincoln, having found it impracticable to surprise the enemy's Posts, "landed near Philipse's House (now Yonkers), before daybreak on the morning of the third, and took possession of the ground on this side the Harlem River near where Fort Independence stood." His accidental discovery by the enemy brought on an action which defeated one of the main objects of the expedition. It happened that a wagon train with an escort of two hundred Yagers and thirty horse was to be sent out that morning from the British Lines, but intelligence having been received during the night that Washington's Army was at Sing Sing on the 2d, it was determined to send out the escort without the wagons to recall an advanced guard which had marched to Yonkers the evening before under Colonel Emmerick. The officer in command not deeming it prudent to "pass a series of defiles before he had reconnoitered Fort Independence," sent forward his advance guard, which in the darkness came within ten yards of Lincoln's troops drawn up in line of battle, before it discovered them. A sharp skirmish ensued in which the enemy were forced to retreat.

The part assigned to the Duke de Lauzun was to beat up DeLancey's Refugees and prevent the relief of the Posts if attacked; but upon his arrival at East Chester on the morning of the 3d, "finding by the firing," as Washington reports on the 6th from his Headquarters at Dobb's Ferry, "that General Lincoln had been attacked and the alarm given, he desisted from a further prosecution of his plan (which could only have been

executed to any effect by surprise), and marched to the General's support, who continued skirmishing with the enemy and endeavoring to draw them so far into the country that the Duke might turn their right and cut them off from their Works on the east side of the Harlem River, and also prevent their passing the river in boats. General Parsons had possessed the heights immediately commanding Kingsbridge and could have prevented their escape by that passage. Every endeavor of this kind proved fruitless, for I found upon going down myself to reconnoiter their situation, that all their force, except very small parties of observation, had retired to York Island. This afforded General Duportail and myself the most favorable opportunity of perfectly reconnoitering the Works upon the north end of the Island, and making observations which may be of very great advantage in the future."

From a letter of Captain Marquand's, Aid-de-Camp to General Knyphausen, it appears that during the day General Washington, accompanied by General Parsons, was at the Van Cortlandt Manor House, a mile and a half above Kingsbridge, and probably within the territory occupied by Parsons' Division.

Disappointed in the result of the expedition, Washington, the next day, took position about twelve miles to the rear, the Army encamping in two lines, the right resting on the Hudson near Dobb's Ferry, and the left on the Neperan or Saw Mill River. On the 6th, the French broke camp at North Castle, to which they had advanced on the 3d, and formed a junction with the main body of the American Army at Philipsburg. The place chosen by Washington for their camp was on the high rolling ground between the Neperan and the Bronx, about four miles west of White Plains. The Legion of Lauzun occupied Chatterton's Hill. Here the two armies remained encamped until the 19th of August.

The objective of the campaign was understood to be the capture of New York, and the assurances were that when this should become the object, New England would turn out almost *en masse*. Instead of this, operations were delayed for more than six weeks and finally abandoned because of the failure of the Eastern States to forward their quotas of provisions and men.

This condition of affairs was very aggravating to both Washington and Parsons, and especially so to Parsons upon whom Washington chiefly depended to keep Connecticut up to her duty. Both displayed not a little impatience. On the 10th of May Washington had sent a circular letter to the several New England States, in which he wrote:—"I have already made representations to the States of the want of provisions, the distress of the Army, and the innumerable embarrassments we have suffered in consequence; not merely once or twice, but have reiterated them over and over again. I have struggled to the utmost of my ability to keep the Army together, but all will be vain without the effectual assistance of the States." On the 24th and again on the 2d of August, he wrote urging upon the States the necessity of prompt action in sending forward their quotas, declaring that without them it would be imprudent to advance. The Connecticut Legislature, which, in answer to the circular of May 10, presented to it by General Heath, had promised to send immediately one hundred and sixty head of cattle, had, on the 1st of July wrote Heath, sent but fifty-two. On that date Washington wrote to Governor Trumbull as follows:

PEEKSKILL, *July 1, 1781.*

MY DEAR SIR.—I am again obliged to trouble your Excellency with the distress we are in for want of provisions to feed the troops. By a return from the Commissary General of Issues, we have received from the 12th of May to this date, only three hundred and twelve head of cattle, and these in the following proportions: New Hampshire, thirty; Massachusetts Bay, two hundred and thirty; Connecticut, fifty-two, in all three hundred and twelve. From this supply, with the half of salted provisions, we have barely subsisted from hand to mouth. . . . Thus circumstanced I am obliged to declare that unless more strenuous exertions are made by the State to feed its troops in the field, we shall be reduced to the necessity, not only of relinquishing our intended operations against New York, but shall be absolutely obliged to disband for want of subsistence; or, which is almost equally to be lamented, the troops will be obliged to seek it for themselves wherever it is to be found. Either of these circumstances taking place will put us into a most distressing situation on our own account, and at the same time place us in a most shameful point of view in the eyes of

our French Allies, and unhappily reduce them to a most disagreeable dilemma.

I have the honor &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. G. WASHINGTON.

P.S. Mr. Stevens will mention the necessity of rum and the deficiency from your State in that article.

In addition to their sufferings and consequent discontent from the lack of sufficient food, the Connecticut troops were becoming dangerously disaffected on account of the continued neglect of their State to provide for their arrears of pay. The Committee of the Line, appointed for the purpose, having failed to effect a settlement with the State, asked General Parsons to explain the reasons to the troops. After consulting General Huntington, it was deemed best to bring the matter to the attention of General Washington, which Parsons did in the following letter:—

CAMP PEEKSKILL, *June 26, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—The Committee from the Connecticut Line, appointed to adjust their accounts with the State, have returned without effecting a settlement, the Lower House of Assembly refusing to pay any part of the subsistence of the officers before the first of April last, and from that time no more than eight pence half penny per ration, the resolution of Congress notwithstanding. In stating the accounts, the Committee of the Assembly charge many articles supplied the Army at fifty per cent above the price agreed to by the Assembly, which the Legislature refuses to ratify. These reasons prevented a settlement, the gentlemen from the Army not thinking it consistent with their trust to close the account with the total loss of so great a part of their just dues, and have reported the facts to me, desiring me to publish the matter to the Line in such manner as I judge most expedient.

On consulting General Huntington, we thought it proper to inform your Excellency of our apprehensions of the fatal consequences we fear on the refusal of the State to close the accounts and secure the subsistence, as well as the pay, of the Line, and to request your Excellency's advice and direction. The officers have now served from the first of January 1777, and have received very little more than one years pay for their services, and very little prospect appears of a speedy supply of money and no expectation of a settlement of their past wages and subsistence. Their own estates are in a great measure expended in subsisting themselves in

the Army, and they are reduced thereby to a state of distress; and the conduct of Government in this and other instances convinces them that they have no justice to hope from the State unless their accounts are closed and their wages and subsistence secured before the period arrives in which they have no further occasion for the services of the Army. Under these impressions, heightened by their real wants, I fear they will be driven from service on knowing the state in which their demands on Government are left; nor can I hold myself answerable for their conduct. I think it highly probable a very great proportion of officers would immediately resign their commissions even at this season, the consequences of which will be little short of disbanding the Line. I would, therefore, beg your Excellency's direction in the case, and that the Line may once more be aided by your friendly interposition with the State to do them justice. The Governor has always exerted himself to procure that justice which is due the Army. A letter from your Excellency to him on the subject would at least quiet the minds of the officers whilst the matter was in a train of adjustment, and I believe procure that justice from the State which nothing else will effect.

I am with great respect &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

To this General Washington replied:—

HEADQUARTERS, PEEKSKILL, *June 27, 1781.*

SIR.—I have received your favor of yesterday's date and am very sorry to observe its contents. I can think of no mode more eligible than to transmit the letter, with some observations on the probable consequences, to the State of Connecticut. This mode I shall pursue, and hope the State, on further consideration, will do all the justice to their Line, that they have a right to expect.

I am, Sir, &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

Washington accordingly, on the 28th, wrote as follows to Governor Trumbull, and enclosed in his letter, Parsons' letter to him of the 26th:—

HEADQUARTERS, PEEKSKILL, *June 28, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Enclosed your Excellency will receive copy of a letter addressed to me from General Parsons, representing the situation of the troops of your Line of the Army.

I feel myself so distressed at this representation, not only as it affects the troops themselves, but from the apprehensions I have of the consequences which may, from their feelings, be produced to the general service, that, although it is not within my province to interfere with the internal resolutions or determinations of the States, I did not think it amiss to transmit this letter to your Excellency and to beg the most serious attention of the State to its subject.

Permit me, Sir, to add, that policy alone in our present circumstances seems to demand that every satisfaction which can reasonably be requested should be given to those veteran troops who, through almost every distress, have been so long and so faithfully serving the State; as, from every representation, I have but too much reason to suppose that the most fatal consequences to your Line will ensue upon the total loss of any further expectations than they at present have, of relief from the State; and how serious will be the consequences to our present meditated operations, should any disturbance arise in so respectable a body of troops composing this Army, as that from the State of Connecticut, I leave the State to reflect. For myself, I lament the prospect in its most distant idea.

If your Legislature should not be sitting, (as I suppose they are not), I leave it to your Excellency to determine whether it is necessary immediately to convene them on this subject. I have only to wish that it may have as early a consideration as may be found convenient, or consistent with other circumstances which must be best known to your Excellency.

I have the honor to be with the most perfect esteem and regard

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

To Governor Trumbull.

On the 9th of July, Trumbull replied to General Washington as follows:—

LEBANON, *July 9, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—I am honored with your Excellency's letter of 28th June last, with a copy of one addressed to you from General Parsons, enclosed. Your feelings of distress excite a sympathy in my breast, and a readiness to do all in my power to remove the occasion. That the Committee from the Connecticut Line of the Army did not accomplish a full settlement, was to me a matter of sorrow and fear for its consequences. The veteran troops who faithfully served, and bravely endured so many distresses in

defense of their own and their country's righteous cause, in the unhappy contest with the British King and Ministry and continue therein to the end, will be rewarded, acknowledged and remembered with love and gratitude by this and future generations. Surely none will forsake it or cause disturbances at this time, when in a near view of an happy issue. Those who do will meet with reproach and regret.

The country, universally, has had many, very many, embarrassments and great difficulties to encounter and struggle through; enemies, secret as well as open; no permanent army raised; soldiers to be hired into the service for short periods at extravagantly high prices; no magazines of provisions; an army to be fed from hand to mouth; finances deranged; public credit abused and ruined; a rapid depreciation of the currency; the army not paid or clothed; the force and the pernicious policy of a cruel and inveterate enemy to be met and avoided; heavy taxes; unreasonable jealousies; with a train of other grievances more easily conceived than expressed. Suffer me to mention one more, by way of inquiry; whether it is not grievous to hear our officers say, that "they have no justice to hope for from the State, unless their accounts are closed, and their wages and subsistence secured, before the period arrives in which they have no further occasion for the services of the army." I do sincerely wish for that period, and will then and ever exert myself to obtain justice for the officers and soldiers of our Line, as freely as I have done so, to bring the war to a happy close. A full settlement was agreed on for the pay and wages of our Line; the subsistence of the officers is the only matter unsettled. It was proposed to give them eight pence half penny per ration, not from the first of April last, as mentioned in the letter, but from the first of April, 1780; the residue to lie open for the determination of Congress.

The Legislature of this State is not sitting. To call it to meet at this season, when every other business, public and domestic, calls for the attention of the members, will cause discontent and uneasiness. You may depend on my giving the subject as early consideration as may be found convenient and consistent with other circumstances. A sum of money for our Line of the Army, as much as can be collected, shall be forwarded soon.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of great regard and consideration, Yours &c.,

JONATHAN TRUMBULL.

To General Washington.

On the same day, Trumbull replying to Washington's letter of July 1st, after detailing the measures taken to furnish beef to the Army, says:—

I intend to remain home till the troops are forwarded from hence, then to remove to Hartford to promote the hastening on of the fresh beef and other supplies. . . . Mr. Pomeroy hath orders to send on twenty hogsheads of rum, sixty barrels of powder and more will be ordered as soon as I get to Hartford."

On the 10th, General Parsons, at the request of Washington stated to him in writing, the claims of the officers to have their relative rank settled by a Board of Officers, as follows; on the same day, and again on the 12th, he wrote as follows to Governor Trumbull:—

CAMP, *July 10, 1781.*

DEAR GENERAL.—According to your Excellency's directions, I am to state in writing the claims of the different ranks of officers in the Connecticut Line to a Board of Officers to settle their relative rank, or that your Excellency would decide the claims without a Board.

Captains Bulkley and Morris, at the time of settling the rank of captains, were prisoners and have never had an opportunity to be heard, and suppose themselves injured in the settlement, and under the resolution of Congress, claim to be restored to the same rank they would have held if they had taken their regular promotion. The subalterns suppose that the captain-lieutenants on the former establishment, have on the present system no other rank than that of lieutenants, no captain-lieutenants being now known in the Army, and being subaltern officers, are to take rank according to their commissions and in no other manner, there being no higher grade of subalterns than lieutenants. The lieutenants commissioned as second lieutenants before the first of June, 1778, when the new arrangement of the Army took place, suppose themselves much injured by being postponed to those who obtained lieutenancies subsequent to that point by regimental promotion; they say, that at that time they were lieutenants and the different grades of lieutenants then ceased, therefore they are entitled to be considered as lieutenants from that date; that even sergeants, by regimental promotions, will command them on other principles; they further say that these principles were adopted in the Massa-

chusetts Line in the sixteen additional battalions and in other Lines, and that by denying them the same consideration, they will become an exception to most of the Lines in the Army. The various claims before mentioned have become so interesting to the peace of the Line that I must beg your Excellency either to decide on those questions yourself or appoint a Board of Officers to hear their claims and determine on some principles by which they may be settled.

I am with much respect &c.,

To General Washington. SAM. H. PARSONS.

CAMP NEAR DOBB'S FERRY, *July 10th, 1781.*

SIR.—Your Excellency's letter of last February assuring me of a very speedy supply of money for the troops; similar assurances given by the Council in March and April, and your Excellency's direction to promise them a month's pay in solid coin by the first of this month, have been communicated to the Line from time to time, but to this time promises are all they have received and they believe 'tis all they will receive. More than fifteen months have elapsed without their receiving a farthing of pay or any other satisfaction for their services, and they think themselves worse than neglected. I have reason to fear very unhappy consequences will speedily result from this neglect and the refusal of the Legislature to adjust their accounts, and even at this time I fully believe nothing retains a great proportion of your officers but an expectation of a very speedy answer to the General's letter wrote your Excellency on the subject of the denial to settle with the Army. I can in no measure hold myself answerable for the fidelity of your troops under the repeated disappointments they have met with. Justice to my country and myself requires me to be explicit in noticing the Council of the probable consequences of their neglect; 'tis their duty to present the fatal effects which will probably flow from a denial of justice, and 'tis mine to be importunate to procure that justice which your Army has a right to expect and demand, in which case let consequences ever so fatal follow their neglect, I stand justified. Every State has done much towards satisfying the just demands of their troops, and Connecticut, the best of any State in the Union, has done nothing. I must entreat your Excellency to enable me to give them some satisfaction. As to further promises I can make them none. The very many I have been directed by the Council to make, have already rendered my assurances of little avail, and 'tis unjust for me to

make another essay to quiet them in that way. I shall make trial to quiet their minds until there is time to have an answer to this letter, at which period without money or an answer, I must submit to whatever effects flow from the neglect of the State to do justice.

I am with great esteem

Your obt. servant

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

CAMP, *July 12th, 1781,*

SIR.—It is my duty to inform your Excellency of every event by which your troops in the present critical state may be affected. The Rhode Island troops, who compose part of my Division, have just received an addition of two months pay in hard money, which makes six months wages received by them since the first of January. Colonel Olney has been kind enough not to deliver any of it at present, and will withhold it for about eight days longer to know if Connecticut will pay any part of the wages due to its soldiers and officers. The vicinity of our Allies makes the case more distressing, if possible, when they pay every attention to us, and the utmost civility is shown us; 'tis mortifying indeed to be able to return none of the civilities we receive, when other Lines are paid so as to enable the officers and men to appear in character.

The discontent is hourly increasing in your troops, and they have so little confidence in the State that any promises made by it would heighten their resentment until some of the many promises the State has made are fulfilled. They consider the neglect and repeated violations of promises made by the State as adding insult to injustice; and I believe any longer neglect will be attended with the dissolution of the Line, nor will it be in my power to prevent it. I beg to hear from you as soon as possible, that I may know whether anything is to be expected.

I hear the State is selling its lands for any obligations owing from it. I wish to receive my pay in lands. Mr. Lee will wait on you and take any estate which is granted.

I am with esteem &c.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Trumbull.

P. S. I would beg your Excellency to approve the appointment of Joseph Rogers, Ensign in the 2d Regt. and Phinehas Beckwith, in the 1st. Regt. They are doing that duty and officers are much wanted.

To Parsons' letter of the 10th, Governor Trumbull, replied:—

LEBANON, *July 16, 1781.*

SIR.—Your letter of the 10th instant is before me. The letter you refer to from General Washington, (June 28), I have received and answered. (July 9) You doubtless have by this time, or very soon will be favored with a copy of that, which will serve in general as an answer to yours under consideration. Some particular remarks, however, may be both necessary and useful in so critical period as the present. In your letter to General Washington and in yours to me, you charge the Legislature of this State with refusing to settle and adjust the accounts of the Army, and with denying them justice, and say they do not believe they shall ever have anything from the public but promises, and that you cannot hold yourself answerable for the fatal consequences that may follow from the conduct of our Assembly. The Assembly do not consider you as any further answerable than faithfully to perform and fufill the trust reposed in you, an essential part of which is making a fair and just representation both to the public and the Army, in all matters that concern your office, the good of the public and the peace of the Army. It appears to me and to my Council that you are too severe in your remarks, and that a candid attention to what the Assembly have done and are doing to raise money for the Army, and the exertions people at home are making for that purpose; the extreme difficulty of collecting hard money just when the people are called on to recruit the Army at so great an expense; and further, that it is a fact that the Assembly have complied with all the Army requested in point of justice in settlement, excepting actual payment, and a trifling dispute relative to the detained rations of some of the officers, in which, as such, the soldiery have no interest; for which rations the Assembly allowed eight and one-half pence, except for the time Congress made allowance from time to time as they thought fit, subject to further allowance as may appear to them reasonable, and everything proper for the Assembly to have done might have been settled, had not the officers refused. It appears to me if you attend to these facts, you will see that your complaints are not well founded, and that if you make the same representations to the Army as you do to us, they must be extremely dangerous. It is not necessary to make any more promises, as I have no doubt the money proposed will soon be sent forward, as every possible exertion is making for that purpose. I am also persuaded there is no just ground to fear but the Assembly will ever be disposed to do strict justice to the Army, and, all circumstances considered,

it is undoubtedly the duty of every officer in the Army to exert himself in this critical situation of our affairs to quiet the Army by representing to them that, notwithstandng the many hardships and disappointments they have met with, the Assembly and people at home have not only an affecting sense of these distresses, but are exerting themselves to their utmost to provide relief; and that, as our medium is now likely to be certain, we may reasonably hope that our public affairs will soon wear a better face. As these are undoubted realities, I doubt not but the officers will endeavor to make the whole Army realize them. We are all embarked in the same cause. Our interest can be but one, and I doubt not but that by the blessing of God our joint exertions will soon procure a happy peace.

I am with esteem and regard, Sir,
Your obed't hum'b servant

To Major General Parsons. JNO. TRUMBULL.

The next day, Governor Trumbull wrote to Washington complaining of the severe strictures on the Legislature contained in Parsons' letter of the 10th, to him, and enclosed a copy of the letter, with his answer, to the General:—

LEBANON, *July 17, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Since my last to your Excellency, I have received a letter from General Parsons, dated the tenth instant, filled with severe remarks and reflections on our Legislature, a copy thereof with my answer is enclosed.

I wish to do the things that make for peace with both officers and men of the Connecticut Line of the Army, consisting of our own people raised for defending and securing the rights and liberties of the whole, embarked in the same common cause, and to return to citizens again when the contest with the British King and Ministry is ended; to prevent, if possible, discord and division so very dangerous in our situation and hazardous to our present operations. Surely the officers do not desire to inflame the soldiery with apprehensions that the Assembly deny that justice which was done them the last year, with which they were satisfied, when the Committee from the Line know the whole accounts of pay and wages were gone through and ready to be closed on the same principles, and that nothing remained in question but only the detained rations of the officers. This was not agitated till it became time for the Committee to return to their duty and when there was scarcely

time for the members of so numerous a body to deliberate upon the subject. Eight pence half-penny per ration was offered from April first, 1780. Many were of the opinion that by the time of payment that rate would be more than sufficient for the same; others proposed to secure a specific payment. As to what was due before that (April first, 1780) it naturally lay open for the direction of the Honorable Congress. In the midst of these deliberations the Committee left us unexpectedly. I observed no design to deny justice to the officers; to the soldiery, there could be none. The accounts were fully agreed, prepared and ready to be closed. I choose to forbear any recrimination, yet suffer me to inquire, why the Committee from the Line did not bring on the settlement for detained rations earlier? they knew it must require time for deliberations when they well knew the principles for settlement of pay and wages were agreed on the last year. Do they mean to press for more than justice from the necessity of their present services and the fear of fatal consequences, if denied? The whole Line knows, and ought to consider, their pay and wages are secured in full value, while depreciation operates as a heavy tax upon the rest of the people. The officers may likewise consider that their pay was raised by Congress fifty per cent above what the State agreed with them for.

The maxim adopted by the enemy is that old one of "*divide et impera.*" Will we suffer avarice to divide and ruin us and our cause and give them opportunity to exult and triumph over us? Providence hath and doth smile propitiously upon us and calls aloud for union, vigorous exertions, patience and perseverance and to endure hardships as good soldiers, that the end may be peace. Justice and Peace ride together in the same chariot. It will be my constant endeavor that peace may be obtained on just and honorable terms, and that justice may be done to them who jeopard their lives in the high places of the field, in defence and to secure the blessings of freedom for ourselves and posterity.

I wrote yesterday the Treasurer to inform me this week what sum of hard money is and can be immediately collected for the Army, which shall be sent forward without delay. The measures directed and orders given for raising and marching our troops to the Army, are now diligently carrying into execution.

I have the honor to be with every sentiment of esteem and consideration,

Your Excellency's most obdt. humb. servt.

To His Excellency, General Washington. JNO'TH. TRUMBULL.

Trumbull's letters of the 16th and 17th drew from General Parsons the following scathing and indignant response:—

CAMP, *July 26, 1781.*

SIR.—Had a doubt remained in my mind, your Excellency's letter to the Commander in Chief and the one addressed to me of the 16th inst., would have removed a possibility of doubting that in the opinion of the Council no truth can be told with plainness but is unjust and injurious, and that no labor and pains which I take to satisfy the minds of the Connecticut Line of the Army is considered in any other light than unjustifiable design, misrepresentation and little short of exciting mutiny and disorder. This, Sir, is a treatment that I less deserved than expected. I know I have exerted myself to preserve the peace of your Line in every instance since I have had the honor to command it, for which I have received neither gratitude nor good words, and I know it a veritable fact (to use your expression), that the existence of your Line is more owing to the unremitting exertions of myself and the officers of the Line than to anything the State has done.

You tax me, Sir, with making misrepresentations to the army, and that in consequence of those misrepresentations extreme danger is to be apprehended. This observation is founded in an entire mistake, which the gentleman, in whose handwriting I believe your letter to be, well knows, as we have not been accustomed since 1776, nor then in many instances, to call the soldiers together to consult on grievances, or to make representations to them of dangers or difficulties which attend or threaten their situation, but have uniformly observed a different line of conduct. I have carefully reviewed the letter I wrote the General which your Council except against, and am not able to find a tittle of misrepresentation in it. That letter is an official one founded on the report of the committee (of the army); the truth of their report I am not answerable for. I have no reason to believe it contains anything but strict and literal facts, the opinion of the Council notwithstanding. I leave them to justify their own report, and have no doubt they are well able to do it. I agree with the Council "that I am no further answerable for the fidelity of the troops than by a faithful performance of the trust reposed in me, an essential part of which is making a fair and just representation both to the public and the army." However strongly a contrary conduct is implied in your letter, I know I have done my duty with uprightness, and have never made any unfair or unjust representations to the army, unless promising them from time to time by desire of

the Council, what has never been fulfilled, may be considered as such; but every representation I have made to the Line has been that which tended to set Government in the fairest light, and which was most likely to quiet their minds. The many misrepresentations I have been compelled to make for this purpose, if the Council did me justice, they would place to their own account, as it originated with themselves. If this has been a crime to me, I ought to ask pardon of my Maker and the Army, but not of the State by whose importunity I have been misled.

As to representations to the public, 'tis not the custom of the army to make them, nor do we make that appeal but in cases of the greatest urgency. I do not, as you suppose, tax the State with injustice. I but represent to the Commander in Chief, as is my duty, the opinions and feelings of the Line. However mistaken they may be, I am not culpable for their opinions, but should I omit to make a just representation of them, I should be held criminal by every impartial man should ill consequences flow from those opinions; the facts on which their distrust is founded they are well able to represent, and I have no reason to believe them mistaken. But since plainness and literal truths are not agreeable, I will omit to trouble the Council in future on the subject, as I cannot reconcile my mind to a different line of conduct.

The distinction your Council make between the interests of the officers and soldiers I am convinced is popular in the State, which is the only forcible reason I can see for its being adopted. Their interests, in my opinion, are inseparable, and there are but few soldiers who can be induced to believe that that man or body of men who refuse to fulfil a contract made with one class of men, will religiously abide those made with another class. Nor can I see the dispute, which you say was the only one, is so trifling as your Council seem to consider it; nor was that the only dispute, if the committee rightly inform me, and, as they say, a letter addressed to your Excellency at Hartford will convince the world that they did not acquiesce in the report of the Assembly's committee, and that the agreement mentioned in your letter to the General, is a partial one made by the Assembly's committee and objected to by them. Upon the whole, Sir, I am taxed with misrepresentation for stating facts which I have every reason to believe are true. It would be exceedingly improper for me to retort the charge, although the committee of the army are not convinced the facts stated by the Council are a just representation of the transactions.

The expression in your letter I am most affected with, is that you say the sentiments contained in it are your own as well as those of your Council. This, I own, I should not have expected, and I know I never deserved them either from you or them, and had a right to expect a very different treatment from you. If perfect silence in future is most agreeable, I shall not trouble your Excellency or the Council with any further information, and only add that I esteem myself

Your Excellency's much abused and very humble servant

S. H. Parsons.

To Governor Trumbull.

Among the Trumbull Papers are two letters, both dated July 26, 1781, and both signed by officers of the Connecticut Line, from which it is evident that General Parsons, in his representations to the Governor, did not in the least exaggerate the gravity of the situation. The first, addressed to the Governor, is as follows:—

Camp Phillipsborough, *July 26, 1781.*

Sir:—We have been favored with the perusal of your letter to the Commander-in-Chief of the 9th of July, in which it is observed, "a full settlement was agreed upon for the pay and wages of our Line, the subsistence of the officers being the only matter unsettled." From our personal acquaintance with your Excellency, we are led to conceive you have entirely misunderstood the objections made by the Army's Committee in the letter from them delivered you by Col. Swift, previous to our departure from Hartford. After being fully convinced that the State was determined not to do us justice on the subject of retained rations which are considered a very essential part of our pay, we could not think ourselves authorized to proceed any further in adjusting the accounts, and entirely objected to completing a settlement. This we stated in a letter directed to the Assembly's Committee then at Wethersfield, upon which they delivered into our hands all the papers on which a settlement could be grounded, which letter was laid before the House of Assembly with the report of their Committee. That polite attention and treatment we had invariably received from your Excellency, with the attachment you had ever manifested to the interests of the Army, and that our conduct might be perfectly reconciled to your feelings, we gave your

Excellency a stating of the whole matter at large in which we objected to certain articles being charged at fifty per cent higher than the price affixed by the Assembly in their former Resolves; the injustice done a number of officers in receiving orders for clothing which were not paid until the money had greatly depreciated; the inequality of the sum allowed to purchase the articles of provisions withheld from us without our consent, all of which more fully appear by the said letter, were the principal reasons given for our departure previous to completing a settlement. How 'tis possible your Excellency can suppose a full adjustment was agreed upon for pay and wages, is to us mysterious; if so, it has been done without the knowledge or consent of the Army or its Committee. The resolution of the Assembly appointing a Committee to settle with the Army for the year 1780, authorized them to meet such Committee as the Army should appoint for that purpose, by which it fully appears that their Committee was a joint one with the Army Committee. Without their mutual consent, we cannot conceive it possible the business, or any part of it, could be completed. The Assembly must be vested with some powers never before manifested, if their approbation of an ex parte report of two committees, can establish a contract never made. If by the adjustment your Excellency speaks of, is meant an agreement between the Assembly's Committee and themselves, we can have no objections to your Excellency representing it to the Commander-in-Chief, so long as the only knowledge they or any of them have of it, is taken from your Excellency's letter. It appears to us equally unreasonable how any one could suppose the Army was settled with when no payment was made or plan of payment suggested; if this is called a settlement by the State, we must confess the sentiments we have heretofore entertained of their honor and dignity will in future want support. Conscious to themselves that no adjustment had taken place to their knowledge, the Committee from the Army on their arrival in Camp, reported to the Line, (which report was delivered to the Commander-in-Chief), that no settlement with the State was effected for the year, 1780, which very essentially differs from the representation made to him by your Excellency and immediately calls our veracity and personal credit into question. Your Excellency can very easily judge of our feelings in consequence, but we shall have the consolation of believing our report founded upon truth until some evidence of our acquiescing in a settlement is produced.

We are with all possible respect your Excellency's most obed't. and most humble servants

Signed

COL. HERMAN SWIFT,
LT. EBEN HUNTINGTON,
MAJOR DAVID SMITH,
CAPT. RICHARD SILL,
LT. HEZEKIAH ROGERS.

To his Excellency, Governor Trumbull.

The second letter, which follows in full, is signed by sixty-seven officers of the Line—three colonels; three lieut. colonels; two majors; twenty captains; twenty-three lieutenants; thirteen ensigns and three surgeons—is without address, but evidently, was sent to Governor Trumbull to be presented by him to his Council or to the Assembly:—

CAMP, *July 26, 1781.*

SIR:—We have attentively perused the letter from his Excellency, Governor Trumbull to the Commander-in-Chief, of the 9th of July, and are unhappy that the conduct of the State is such as to give grounds for observations which injure the feelings of any of its members.

His Excellency must have forgotten he could be severe, when speaking of those who should quit the Army, he says, "Surely none will forsake it or cause disturbances at this time when in a near view of an happy issue; those who do will meet with reproach and regrets."

After continuing in service almost five years, being compelled to loan three years pay to the Government without obtaining but a small proportion of the interest, and not able as yet to receive but a trifling part of what is due for eighteen months last past; our families reduced to the verge of poverty, our little private fortunes nearly exhausted; our constitutions emaciated and our clothing worn to rags, we never once suspected, after being compelled to quit the Army, we ought to meet reproach from that Country to whose inattention the compulsion owes its origin.

In the midst of our distresses, we have ever indulged the pleasing reflection that our Countrymen at home in ease and luxury, at least were disposed to make us the small satisfaction of gratitude and thanks for fatigues and hardships. The delusion has sweetened our most disagreeable moments and smoothed the face of danger. If what we have already done procures reproach, we may at the close

of the war fully expect a very different reward from the love and gratitude promised in his Excellency's letter.

His Excellency with a degree of anxiety inquires, "Whether it is not grievous to hear our officers say, 'they have no justice to hope for from the State unless their accounts are closed and their wages and subsistence secured before the period arrives in which it has no further occasion for the service of the Army.'" We cannot conceive the observation any further grievous than it wants support from the conduct of the Government. From our attention to mankind and their actions, we are taught to believe, that when an individual or a public body has broken over the rules of justice and equity, 'tis not unreasonable to expect them to pursue in similar circumstances the same line of conduct. By the resolve of the Assembly, October, 1779, for liquidating and adjusting the accounts of the Army to the first of January, 1780, those, who through the fatigues of three campaigns had ruined their constitutions or whose particular distresses had compelled them to obtain discharges, were absolutely excluded from the benefit of the resolves, although, in several instances, they had served within a few days of the given time. Their petitions and remonstrances to the General Assembly on the subject have been enumerated, but to no effect. The reason of this partiality in the mind of every disinterested person would be grounded upon the necessity of our services and the expiration of theirs. Were we silently to pass over the many instances in which the public faith (as his Excellency justly observes) has been abused and ruined, this single instance, so applicable in all its circumstances would be sufficient to justify the observation to the world. Either the State must act a trifling, inconsistent part, or our reward depends upon the necessity of our services to its defense. At the raising of the Army in 1777, a certain number of rations were promised to each rank of officers, which were to be received by them in provisions, or a satisfactory compensation made in lieu thereof. The provision has been withheld from us, not by our consent. The Assembly (who, after the recommendation of Congress to the several States to settle with their respective troops, ought to make such compensation), refuse to make that allowance which a committee from their own body judged was our due. Government has not punctually paid the interest of the moneys which, from their holding them in their own hands, they have compelled us to loan to them, except in a few instances. Money for wages has been repeatedly promised us for more than twelve months past by the Governor and Commanding Officer of the Line, [Parsons] but not a single farthing

has arrived. Whether this neglect has arisen from the inability of the Government to execute its own orders, or from the orders themselves not being sufficiently extensive to answer the purpose proposed, to us is very immaterial; in the result our just dues are withheld from us. While our opinion is the necessary consequence of disagreeable evidence, we cannot conceive how it can fall with any grief upon those who, in all circumstances, have discharged their duty. Faith, whether moral or political, is equally averse to compulsion; the difficulty of creating it in one instance is the same as in the other, both must depend upon the evidence of truth communicated to the mind. To believe without evidence would be miraculous, and to disbelieve with it, impossible. Our wishes and interests compel us to faith in Government, and his Excellency may depend upon it, solid arguments drawn from the purses of those we defend, will renew, and a faithful fulfillment of promises support, such a faith as will make us sound political believers, without which nothing short of an entire alteration of the original plan of our natures can effect. We wish you to communicate these our sentiments to those who censure us for speaking truths we cannot avoid believing.

Headquarters, Dobb's Ferry, August 3, 1781, Washington wrote to Governor Trumbull as follows:—

SIR.—I regret being obliged to inform your Excellency, that I find myself at this late period very little stronger than I was when the Army first moved out of its Quarters. I leave your Excellency to judge of the delicate and embarrassed situation in which I stand at this moment. Unable to advance with prudence beyond my present position, while perhaps in the general opinion my force is equal to the commencement of operations against New York, my conduct must appear, if not blamable, highly mysterious at least. Our Allies, with whom a junction has been formed upwards of three weeks, and who were made to expect from the engagements which I entered into with them at Wethersfield in May last, a very considerable augmentation of our force by this time, instead of seeing a prospect of advancing, must conjecture, upon good grounds, that the campaign will waste fruitlessly away. . . . I cannot yet but persuade myself, and I do not cease to encourage our Allies with the hope, that our force will still be sufficient to carry our intended operation into effect; or, if we cannot fully accomplish that, to oblige the enemy to withdraw part of their force from the southward to support New York, which, as I informed you in my

letter from Wethersfield, was part of our plan. Your Excellency must be sensible, that the fulfillment of my engagements must depend upon the degree of vigor with which the executives of the several States exercise the powers with which they have been vested, and enforce the laws lately passed for filling up and supplying the Army. . . . I have the honor &c.,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S.—For the quiet of the troops of your Line, I am anxious that a sum of money to the amount of two or three months pay, may come on immediately. If this is much longer delayed, I am fearful what may be the consequences.

To Governor Trumbull.

The Governor would seem to have assented to the method urged by Parsons and his fellow officers and endorsed by Washington, of renewing and supporting his soldiers' faith in their State and converting them into "sound political believers," for, as appears from his reply to the preceding letter, he had already commenced drawing "solid arguments from the purses of those they defend."

HARTFORD, *August 8, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Your Excellency's letter of the third instant is received. We have exerted ourselves to obtain money for the Connecticut Line of the Army, and have had success so far as to put up thirty-five thousand pounds lawful money in solid silver and gold, ready to be conveyed to the Army for pay and wages of our Line. It will be at Danbury by the fifteenth instant. Wish for directions relative to bringing it forward, and the safety thereof.

I have given renewed orders for raising, detaching and marching the men for the Continental Army. The two State regiments at Horseneck, and for three months service, to march to West Point, hoping the same will have a good effect.

I expect to-morrow morning to set out on my journey to Danbury and shall there receive your letters and directions.

I am with every sentiment of esteem, yours &c.,

JON'TH TRUMBULL.

To his Excellency, General Washington.

The preceding correspondence between Washington, Parsons and the Governor and Council of Connecticut relative to the Connecticut Line, appears to have been effectual in stirring up

the authorities of that State to more prompt and efficient action, and if Parsons did let loose his indignation somewhat, it was no more than his State deserved for its apathy at this most critical period. The Governor and Council must have been satisfied upon further reflection that Parsons was in the right, for not long after they honored him with a signal mark of their confidence by requesting him to take under his command the State troops and Coast Guard raised by the State for its own defense, together with such militia as should be ordered to the coast, and dispose them in such manner as he should judge necessary to protect the inhabitants along the shore from the incursions of the enemy. The following is the full text of the order:—

Resolved, That the following order to Major General Parsons be, and the same is, approved, and his Excellency, the Governor is desired to sign and transmit the same to Major General Parsons accordingly.

State of Connecticut, by the Captain General to Major General Parsons.

Sir.—The desultory expeditions on the coast of this State, requiring the immediate attention of the Council of Safety to oppose the designs of the enemy and, if possible, compel them to desist from their present system of carrying on the war, I am advised by the Council to desire you to repair to the western part of this State and take under your command the State troops and Coast Guards who are raised for the protection of this State, and such of the militia as shall be ordered there, and such force from the Continental Army as may be sent for the protection of this State; and you are hereby empowered and authorized to dispose this force in such manner as you judge necessary for the purposes intended, subject, however to such orders from time to time as you may receive from me or the Council of Safety of this State; and you are hereby authorized and empowered to call forth such part of the militia of the Second, Fourth and Sixth Brigades within the State as you may judge necessary to repel any invasion of the Coast of this State; and also to undertake with the troops of this State, or such other force as you shall be provided with, any expedition against the enemy in any Post they occupy. And for this purpose, you are authorized and empowered to seize and impress any vessels, boats or other craft for transporting men, artillery or military stores necessary for any enterprise you may undertake.

You will from time to time inform me of the state of the enemy, their designs and intentions as far as may come to your knowledge, and of such military preparations as may be made in the western parts of this State in consequence of this order, and whatever in the course of executing your orders may occur by which the State may be affected.

Given with the advice of the Council at Hartford, September 10th, 1781. JNO'TH TRUMBULL,

Governor.

Headquarters, near Dobb's Ferry, July 12, 1781, General Washington wrote to General Parsons:—

SIR.—I have sent to request that you will be pleased to send one of your Aids-de-Camp to give orders to Brigadier General Waterbury for me, to put the whole of his troops in motion to-morrow morning and to march them to Mamaroneck or North Street, at one of which places he will receive further orders respecting the position he is to take.

General Waterbury will move at the time appointed without fail, and give orders for the baggage to follow as soon as may be; as the Corps cannot be of any service while it continues at such a distance as it is at present from the Army.

I am &c.,

To General Parsons. G. WASHINGTON.

On the 21st of July, a reconnaisance in force was made of the defenses on the upper part of New York Island. At eight o'clock in the evening of that day, about five thousand troops marched in four columns by as many different roads. The right, consisting of the Connecticut Division, twenty-five of Sheldon's Horse and two pieces of artillery, under the command of Major General Parsons, marched by the North River road. Two Divisions under Major Generals Lincoln and Howe, with the Corps of Sappers and Miners and four field pieces, formed the next column and advanced by the Saw Mill River road. On the left of the Americans was the French right, consisting of the brigade of Bourbonnais with the battalion of Grenadiers and Chasseurs, two field pieces, and two twelve-pounders. Their left column was composed of Lauzun's Legion, one battalion of Grenadiers and Chasseurs, the Regiment of Soissonnais, two field pieces and two howitzers. General

Waterbury with the militia and State troops of Connecticut, was to march on the East Chester road, there to be joined by Sheldon's cavalry for the purpose of scouring Throg's Neck. Sheldon's infantry was to join the Duke de Lauzun and scour Morrisania, being covered by Scammell's light infantry, who were "to advance through the fields, waylay the roads, stop all communication and prevent intelligence from getting to the enemy." At Valentine's Hill the left column of the Americans and the right of the French effected a junction. The whole army, Parsons' Division in the lead, arrived at Kingsbridge about daylight, and formed on the heights back of Fort Independence, extending towards DeLancey's Mills; while the Legion of Lauzun and Waterbury's Corps proceeded to scour Morrisania and Throg's Neck, but with little effect as most of the Refugees had fled. A few, however, were caught and some horses brought off. The enemy were completely surprised. After spending the 22d and 23d in making a careful and thorough reconnaisance, the army marched back about six o'clock by the same routes, but in the reverse order, and reached the camp at Philipsburgh about midnight.

Westchester County, during the Revolutionary War, was infested with marauding bands known as Cow-Boys and Skinners. The former were cattle thieves and made up of Refugees and Tories, and the latter, so called from their taking everything they could find, professed to be on the American side; but the two sets had a good understanding with each other and plundered patriots and loyalists with equal impartiality. To repress these bands was not easy, for the guerrilla of to-day became the peaceable farmer of to-morrow, but Parsons believed their depredations could be stopped, and on the 28th wrote Washington to that effect, suggesting measures to accomplish it.

CAMP, *July 28, 1781.*

SIR.—From the intelligence I have received from the country and my own observation, I am convinced that the inhabitants in the rear of the Army are intimately connected with the Refugees who are on the roads in our rear, and at many times form part of the robbers who are constantly distressing the inhabitants and rendering it dangerous to pass the roads. I would, therefore, propose as a further security, that no persons under the description of volunteers be per-

mitted to assemble in arms in the rear of the Camp, unless they are put under the command of such officers as shall be appointed by your Excellency, accountable to you, and that where there is reason to believe any of the inhabitants harbor or give intelligence to the Refugees, they shall be removed. A further regulation appears to be necessary to prevent plundering the inhabitants in our rear, and I know of none better than to order all plunder taken to be delivered to the Commissary or Quartermaster General, whether taken by the regular troops or volunteers on pain of imprisonment.

I am &c.,

To General Washington. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The inhabitants along the Sound lived in constant fear of attacks from the enemy and were continually urging that regular troops be stationed there for their defense. August tenth, Abraham Davenport wrote from Stamford, a place as much exposed as any on the border, asking Washington to detach some part of his Army as a guard, a request he would hardly have made had he understood the situation and the impossibility of granting it at this most critical period:—

STAMFORD, *August 10, 1781.*

SIR.—Your Excellency has undoubtedly been informed of the exposed situation of this part of the country and of the frequent incursions of the enemy. Several inhabitants have been killed and wounded, and nearly sixty within a short time carried into confinement and robbed of their property, and unless some protection is afforded, those who are of ability and inclination will retire into the country, and others will make their peace. The ardor of the people, (which is to be lamented,) has abated in consequence of their distresses, so that very little opposition is to be expected from them. If it be consistent with the general good for your Excellency to detach some part of the Army as Guards upon this representation, I have no doubt it will be done. General Parsons will inform your Excellency of the designs of the enemy against this Town and can give you any other information you desire. I am with esteem, Your Excellency's

most obed't. Serv't.,

To General Washington. ABR'M. DAVENPORT.

Rochambeau, at the Wethersfield conference, had favored a southern campaign in preference to an attempt on New York,

believing it impracticable to bring the large French ships of the Line into the Harbor, and that, without the assistance of the fleet, the city could not be successfully attacked. His plan, while not wholly abandoned, had beeen, at the instance of Washington, contingently laid aside for the attempt on New York. The result of the several reconnaisances must have raised a doubt in Washington's mind as to whether anything more could be accomplished by the present expedition, for in a letter to Lafayette of July 30, he says:—

> I think we have effected one part of the plan of the campaign settled on at Wethersfield, that is, giving a substantial relief to the Southern States by obliging the enemy to recall a considerable part of their force from thence. Our view must now be turned towards endeavoring to expel them totally from those States, if we find ourselves incompetent to the siege of New York.

Early in August Washington began his preparations for a possible abandonment of New York for the South. Indeed, events were now rapidly creating a state of affairs which left him no alternative. "The feeble compliance of the States with his requisitions for men hitherto, and the little prospect of greater exertions in the future," forbade the hope of any material increase in his Army; three thousand Hessian troops arriving on the 11th of August had raised Clinton's force to eleven thousand men; Cornwallis, it was learned on the 15th, had marched down the Peninsula to Yorktown, and would probably weaken his force by sending reinforcements to New York, though in fact none were sent, their departure having been prevented by the arrival of the French fleet; Count de Grasse had sent word that he would reach the Chesapeake by the end of August, and Lafayette's troops had been so disposed as to prevent the enemy's escape through the Carolinas. Matters thus brought to a crisis, Washington was compelled for the time to abandon his designs on New York and turn his attention to the more promising field of operations on the Peninsula.

On the 19th of August, both armies broke camp, the Americans crossing the Hudson at King's Ferry on the next day, and the French between the 22d and 25th. Every effort was made to mislead both the Army and Clinton, as to the objective of the

march, the roads being repaired towards Kingsbridge and Staten Island and a French bakery set up at Chatham. Misleading letters were also written to fall into the enemy's hands. Marching to the head of the Elk, the troops were embarked on sailing vessels and arrived before Yorktown September 28. The place was completely invested on the 30th, and on the 19th of October, four years and two days after Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, Cornwallis surrendered to the allied forces the Posts of Yorktown and Gloucester, with about seven thousand British troops, together with his shipping and seamen. This event caused the fall of North's Ministry and virtually ended the war.

CHAPTER XXIII

HEATH COMMANDS IN THE HIGHLANDS. PARSONS TAKES CHARGE OF THE DEFENSE OF CONNECTICUT. PREPARES TO ATTACK LLOYD'S NECK. HEATH FAILS TO SUPPORT HIM. THE CONNECTICUT TROOPS WINTER IN THE HIGHLANDS. AS TO DISABLED OFFICERS. PARSONS' FAREWELL ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS. RESIGNS HIS COMMISSION AS MAJOR GENERAL.

August, 1781—July, 1783

BEFORE leaving for the South, General Washington issued the following instructions to Major General Heath, whom he left in command in the Highlands:—

SIR.—You are to take command of all the troops remaining in this Department, consisting of the two regiments of New Hampshire, ten of Massachusetts and five of Connecticut, the Corps of Invalids, Sheldon's Legion, the Third Regiment of Artillery, together with all such State troops and militia, as are retained in service, and who would have been under my own command.

The security of West Point and the Posts in the Highlands, is to be considered the first object of your attention. . . . The force now put under your orders, it is presumed, will be sufficient for the purpose, as well as to yield a very considerable protection and cover to the country, without hazarding the safety of the Posts in the Highlands. . . . The protection of the northern and western frontiers of the State of New York, as well as those parts of that and other States most contiguous and exposed to the ravages and depredations of the enemy, will claim your attention. . . . Although your general rule of conduct will be to act on the defensive only, yet is not meant to prohibit you from striking a blow at the enemy's Posts, or detachments, should a fair opportunity present itself.

The most eligible position for your Army, in my opinion, will be on the north side of Croton River, as well for the purpose of supporting the garrison of West Point, annoying the enemy and covering the country, as for the security and repose of your troops. Waterbury's brigade, which may be posted towards the Sound,

Sheldon's Corps, the State troops of New York and other light parties, may occasionally be made use of to hold the enemy in check, and carry on a *petite guerre* with them, but I would recommend keeping your force as much collected and as compact as the nature of the service will admit, doing duty by corps instead of detachments, whenever it is practicable.

It will not be expedient to prevent such militia as were ordered, from coming in, until the arrival of the Count de Grasse, or something definite or certain is known from the southward; and even then circumstances may render it advisable to keep the enemy at New York in check, to prevent their detaching to reinforce their southern Army, or to harass the inhabitants on the seacoast.

You will be pleased, also, to keep me regularly advised of every important event which shall take place in your Department.

Given under my hand at Headquarters, this 19th day of August 1781.

These instructions imposed a very grave responsibility upon Heath and his officers. With a force much inferior to Clinton's he was expected to defend the Posts on the Hudson and keep open the communication between New England and Middle States, besides protecting the inhabitants. But thanks to the supineness of Clinton, the troops left in the Highlands had very little to employ them during Washington's absence in Virginia, beyond guarding against the predatory parties sent out from New York.

Danbury, August 22, 1781, General Parsons presented the following memorial:—

To his Excellency the Governor and Honorable Council of Safety sitting in Danbury:—

The memorial of the subscriber showeth, that the State is indebted to him in several sums for his past wages and on other accounts to a considerable amount; that his attention to his duty in the Army necessarily prevented him from pursuing those measures to secure lands in payment of the said debts, which other men not confined to the Army are at leisure to effect; that he conceives the design of the Act of the Assembly for disposing of the forfeited lands, is to pay their debts; he, therefore, prays that an order may issue from this Board to enable your memorialist to take up so much of the forfeited lands in Colchester or Lyme or such other place as may be convenient, as at appraisal will amount to

the debt Government owes him; or if more eligible, that he may be at liberty to take lands in the town of Greenwich at their full value. I as in duty bound &c. SAML. H. PARSONS.

General Parsons having learned from his spies in New York, that it was the intention of the enemy, in case Washington should march to Virginia, to make a diversion in favor of Cornwallis by attacking various places on the coast, sent the following communication to the authorities of Connecticut:—

The subscriber states for the consideration of the Governor and Council of Safety, the following facts:—

That by intelligence he has received from New York on which he thinks he has reason to rely, the enemy's present intention is to undertake desultory expeditions upon the coasts of some of the States in the Union, if the Army under the command of General Washington should march to Virginia. That the Associated Loyalists at Lloyd's Neck at no time exceed three hundred men; that the garrison at Shongum near Smithtown on Long Island does not exceed fifty men; that the Fort on Lloyd's Neck is an irregular square, having a fosse about four feet deep and about the same width, nearly surrounding it; that 'tis fraised on every part; that upright pickets nearly of the same height and diameter are placed without the ditch and an abatis without the whole; that a passage into the Fort sufficient for a wagon is open, having neither gate nor any other obstruction; that near the center of the Fort is a block house made of four inch plank, but without loop-holes or any artificial preparations for firing and musketry; that on the walls of the Fort are mounted four long 12 pounders and two 8 pounders, and in the Fort is a brass 4 pound field piece; that in the day time they have within the Fort two men constantly and eight men at night, the rest of the garrison being in barracks and encamped from one hundred to three hundred yards from the Fort; that a Picket is kept by the enemy at a high bluff near the entrance of Huntington Harbor; that about two miles further west is a fine sandy beach, as he is informed, and no Picket is kept there or between that and the Fort; that he is informed that a body of men may be marched from this place to within two hundred yards of the Fort without great hazard of discovery. The naval strength in the Sound was, last Thursday, the "Associate" brig, fourteen 4 pounders, Capt. Hoit; one sloop, ten 9 pounders, Capt. Thomas; one sloop ten 4 pounders; one ship

twenty-four 9 and 4 pounders; the Argo brig, fourteen 6 pounders; the Keppel brig, ten 4 pounders; one galley, the last two near Hart's Island. The ship is cruising in different places and the other armed vessels are usually dispersed from Huntington to Hempstead Harbor. The Fort Shongum mounts two 6 pounders and is of little strength. The disposition of the enemy's force on Long Island is as follows; at Jamaica, Ludlow's regiment, 350 men; at Flushing Fly, Arnold's Corps, about 200; between Jamaica and Bedford, Murray's Corps, about 150; at the fresh meadows in Flushing Bounds, the 19th Dragoons; at Brookline, the Grenadiers of the 47th Regiment and some of the late German recruits, neither of which corps are within supporting distance of Fort Franklin or the Fort at Shongum. Considering the importance of removing the enemy from the Post they occupy on Lloyd's Neck, the great expense and hazard to this State, particularly occasioned by the vicinity of that Post, it is submitted to your consideration whether it would not justify an attempt to carry the Fort by assault in the following plan or such other as shall be found more eligible, viz: that four or five hundred men be landed in the night and marched, if possible, undiscovered to the nearest distance to the Fort and attempt the possession of it by the gateway. This in the opinion of the subscriber, will probably succeed, provided the troops arrive within 300 yards of the Fort without being discovered, because, under those circumstances, a rapid march from that distance will enable them to gain the Fort before the enemy can possibly form and recover from the confusion they will necessarily be thrown into. If a discovery should be made upon the troops landing, 'tis probable the enterprise will fail. Whether the peculiarly distressing situation of the inhabitants on the seacoast will warrant the attempt is submitted to your consideration. Your obed's. servt.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To the Governor and Council of Safety, Hartford, Conn.

In compliance with the request of the Governor and Council of the 10th instant, General Parsons proceeded to organize the defenses of the State along the shores of the Sound, and on the 13th from New Haven and on the 17th from Stamford, reported his action to the Governor in the two following letters:—

NEW HAVEN, *Sept. 13, 1781.*

SIR:—A number of the militia ordered from Generals Ward's and Hart's brigades are in this town; their exact numbers I have

not yet been able to ascertain, perhaps 300. I shall not dismiss such part as your Excellency and the Council ordered until I can satisfy myself of the enemy's further intentions. If proper expresses were established within every eight or ten miles from Stamford to this place and beacons erected at proper places, I think 300 men, besides the Coast Guard, stationed at this place would be sufficient, because this body of men with the Coast Guards, would be able in conjunction with the militia who could collect in a few hours, to give them such opposition as would retard their operations till a greater force should arrive. These ought to be formed in one battalion, that the whole shall be under one direction. I shall organize the detachments here in that manner and shall call into service such number of dragoons as I shall find necessary, for expresses, which I shall not be able to determine before I reach Stamford, for which I shall set out this morning. The fleet under Arnold passed Stamford yesterday, but I cannot think myself warranted in dismissing all the militia until I am able to ascertain their future intentions, which I hope will be in a few days. I find there is no regular supply of provisions for the men. If the Council will direct Mr. Barnard to order the provisions collected in this County to be sent to this town and to direct the issuing of them, the difficulty will be removed. This is necessary to be done soon, as the troops must otherwise disband; some rum is also necessary for them. Upon examination, I find a great deficiency of ammunition. Should the enemy make an attack here, the troops could not resist them for half an hour. I must beg the Council to provide at least 100,000 cartridges more for this place as speedily as possible. The arrival of the Count de Grasse with twenty-eight sail of the Line, exclusive of De Barras' squadron, their landing 3000 men who had joined the Marquis, the capture of a ship of 22 guns in the Chesapeake and of a Packet with Lt. Rawdon on board, are now reduced to a certainty, and on the 5th inst. the advance of our Army was at the Head of the Elk. A rumor prevails that General Greene has had an action in Carolina, in which the enemy was defeated. I will thank your Excellency for the particulars if you have received them. I am with great respect &c.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To Governor Trumbull.

STAMFORD, *September 17, 1781.*

SIR.—After giving the directions I thought necessary at New Haven and the towns on the coast, I came to this place on Saturday night, at which time a fleet of forty-three sail, three of which

were armed vessels, appeared off Huntington, having come that day from Whitestone, where there then remained two ships and three armed brigs. The daylight was so far gone that it was impossible to determine from this shore whether the fleet went into the Bay, upon which, to prevent surprise, I immediately dispatched expresses on the coast to New Haven, informing of the appearance of the fleet and that I could not then determine their intention, but would take the earliest and most effectual method to know whether they were bound up on a predatory expedition and to what object they would direct their force, and desired the information to be continued to Newport. For this purpose I immediately dispatched a boat to lie off Huntington that night so as to be able to inform whether the fleet went eastward, but on its return yesterday morning, they had not been able to discover the fleet. A brisk wind which lasted all night and gave opportunity to the fleet to run far east, and the darkness of the night, prevented their seeing at a distance. I took every measure I could devise yesterday to satisfy myself whether they were gone east, but could gain no information satisfactory. Last, I sent into the Bay and Harbor near Lloyd's Neck, and on the return of the boats am informed the fleet is not at that place. I also sent a flag yesterday with orders to return yesterday, but they have not yet arrived. I did not think it warrantable to call in a greater part of the militia on the then uncertainty of the force and intentions of the enemy, but to put the coast on their guard. The distant and heavy firing we hear this morning in the east makes me fear the enemy have gone that way, and have again landed, especially as a report prevails that some shipping has gone eastward from Sandy Hook (but of this I am not satisfied); however, should this be the case, I think that I have done all I ought under the circumstances to have done to prevent the misfortune. I think I have fallen upon such measures as will ensure pretty authentic intelligence from New York as often as once a week. This will be attended with some small expense which I wish your direction to engage. A report prevails that Admiral Digby has arrived and also of a naval engagement with Admiral De Barras', which is said to have issued against our Allies, and also of a large embarkation of troops, but none of these is yet sufficiently authenticated.

I am with great esteem &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Headquarters, Continental Village, September 19, 1781, Major General Heath wrote to Major General Parsons:—

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 17th is just come to hand. In a letter I had the honor to receive from his Excellency, Governor Trumbull, dated at Hartford the 7th inst., his Excellency is pleased to express himself as follows:—

"General Parsons, who was returning to Camp, I have desired to remain in the State for the present." My reply in a letter of the 10th was:—"I wish Major General Parsons to join the Army as soon as his presence at the eastward, can be dispensed with." . . . At this particular time, when the enemy in New York may be supposed to be peculiarly active, with design, if possible, to relieve Lord Cornwallis, and when many places are threatened, it is both my wish and expectation that all officers whom I have the honor to command, will be with their respective commands, that I may have it in my power to make such detachments as the good of the service, my country and my superiors have a right to expect. Every part of the country which is committed to my care, or supposed to be entitled to protection from the Army, may depend upon receiving aid as far as circumstances will permit, and for which, comformable to my instructions, I hold myself accountable.

From several circumstances, I am led to conclude that the fleet which passed up the Sound on Saturday, is not designed against the towns in the vicinity of Stamford.

I have heard nothing of Major Lawrence; hope no accident has befallen him. I am with regard, dear Sir, &c.,

W. HEATH, *M. General.*

To Major General Parsons.

Lloyd's Neck, September 16, 1781, Colonel Upham, the British Commissary of Prisoners at that Post, writes to General Parsons:—

DEAR SIR.—Your Aid-de-Camp, Captain Walker, will inform you of the present situation of the persons lately escaped from the Simsbury Mines; on that subject I have conversed with Captain Walker and from him you will learn my sentiments.

I most heartily join with you in desiring that persons who may at any time be so unhappy as to be made prisoners, should be liberated as soon as will consist with the public views, we are on each side pursuing; have therefore, consented to the exchange of Mr. Hewin and John Bell for Lieutenant Smith; Bell will be sent out as soon as possible.

The Reverend Mr. Mather is also to be exchanged for the Rev. Mr. Badoin; the former will be sent with Mr. Bell. Phinehas Waterbury and Saml. Richards will go out at the same time in exchange for Lyon and Hait, now at Hartford; as to the others now in confinement with us, I beg leave also to refer you to Captain Walker for my sentiments and the steps I have taken.

I honestly confess to you I believe Jack, the Sailor and his companion are vile deserters, and leave you to treat them as you may think proper. Am not possessed of the names of the prisoners taken at New London, but am happy to inform you they are gone back exchanged.

I have the honor to be &c.,

To General Parsons. J. UPHAM.

Rev. Moses Mather was the Pastor of the Church at Darien, Connecticut, and a distant connection of Parsons' wife. With forty members of his congregation he had been taken prisoner the 22d of the previous July, by a party of British Refugees from Long Island, who surrounded the church during the Sunday afternoon service, and, tying their captives two and two, marched them with the venerable Pastor at their head, to the Sound, across which they were shipped to Lloyd's Neck and thence taken to and imprisoned in New York.

Norwalk, October 10th 1781, Colonel Stephen St. John 2d. writes to General Parsons:—

DEAR GENERAL.—I have to solicit once more a permission for myself and son to return to New York to answer our paroles. We have hitherto been detained in consequence of explicit orders from Colonel Skinner, Commissary General of Prisoners, and the injunction laid on us by your Honor of the 16th of September last, but hope those difficulties that then subsisted are now removed and that we may have your Honor's permission to return to New York again immediately.

I am with sincere respect
Your most obed't and most humble serv't.,

STEPHEN ST. JOHN 2D.

To Major General Parsons.

October 18, General Parsons writes to General Trumbull, calling his attention to the destitute condition of the troops of the Connecticut Line, and asking for a supply of clothing:—

SIR.—I hope I shall be forgiven when I remind your Excellency of the state of your troops in respect to their clothing. The cold weather is now coming on and those who are now fit for duty will be rendered unfit, and those who are now badly provided with clothing will exceedingly suffer. 'Tis our misfortune that our summer clothing is provided in the fall and our winter garments in warm weather, or, too often, not at all. I don't know of any continental supply provided and I fear we shall greatly suffer unless the State furnishes woolen clothing for its soldiers speedily. 'Tis disagreeable to complain. I know the State is greatly embarrassed, but 'tis my duty to inform you that the troops will soon be naked unless clothing is provided. I have no other place to complain but to the State and such measures as are necessary I hope will be taken to prevent the misfortune. The troops have received a little money, which is certainly a great relief to them, but this was not designed to clothe the soldiers nor is the sum received sufficient, besides I fear our dependence of a speedy supply of more money cannot be well founded when I see so very great proportions of the money paid expended so that there is no hope of its return to the State again. The officers, who in general have been scantily provided with clothing, are laying out their moneys to make themselves comfortable, and the soldiers devote the little they receive to paying their debts and procuring necessaries. Most of the moneys so expended will not probably find their way back to our country.

I am with esteem and respect,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

October 15, General Parsons writes to Governor Trumbull, as follows:—

SIR:—Mr. Thaddeus Bell of Middlesex [the same mentioned in Upham's letter of the 16th ult.] has come from the Provost in New York on his parole for a short time, when he must return to his confinement unless he can effect his exchange for one, Conkling Shadden, now in Hartford Gaol. As there now seems to be an inclination on the part of the enemy to drop the matter they have so long contended with the State about, I could wish as many of our prisoners confined by the enemy might be liberated as we have proper subjects of exchange in our hands. The enemy's fleet in New York are using every exertion to get to sea and were under some expectation of falling down to the Hook yester-

day. They have a number of fire-ships with them and I believe are designed to relieve Cornwallis; I hope they are too late. Major Lawrence has received the permit of the Council and will conform to it. I expect to leave this place in two or three days for Camp in the Highlands. At present there are no armed vessels in Huntington and but one in Oyster Bay. If boats can be provided, I think it would be a good time to attempt the surprise of Lloyd's Neck, but I fear we cannot get boats in season.

The lands granted me in Horseneck are appraised and surveyed. The contents are one hundred and fifty-one acres and a fraction, at four pounds, ten shillings per acre. The boundaries are enclosed. It will thank you, Sir, to direct the Treasurer or whomsoever is authorized to execute a good deed of warranty to me of the land and I will give up the securities on receiving the deed. I am with much esteem &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 16th, General Waterbury writes to General Parsons in regard to deserters he is sending him for examination:—

SIR.—This morning came into camp three deserters from the British Fleet, which I send you for examination. Also one, John Lawrence, a deserter from the British troops, who came in about three weeks ago and formerly deserted from the regiment that Colonel Meigs had the command of. I have kept Lawrence under guard in order to send him to his regiment, but could not on account of his ill state of health, and am

Dear Sir, with respect &c.,

To General Parsons. DAVID WATERBURY, *B. Gen'l.*

Fort Franklin, October 19, 1781, Colonel Upham writes to Brigadier General Waterbury as to exchange of prisoners:—

SIR.—I received a line a few days since from General Parsons enclosing two lists of prisoners proposed by him to be exchanged for each other. The list of prisoners to us contained amongst others, a Mr. Jesse Raymond; the list of prisoners to you contained amongst others, a Mr. Talcot. Mr. Raymond is coming from New York and will be allowed to go out provided you consent to his exchange for Talcot, who goes in this.

I have the honor to be &c.,

To Brig'd. Gen'l. Waterbury, or the officer commanding at Stamford. J. UPHAM, *Lt. Colonel &c.,*

Lloyd's Neck, a broad promotory extending into the Sound and enclosing Huntington Bay on its west side, had for a long time been the center for illicit trading and the transmission of intelligence. It was defended by Fort Franklin, a description of which accompanied Parsons' communication to the Governor and Council of Connecticut submitting for their consideration, whether the danger of this Post to the State would not justify an attempt to carry the Fort by assault. It had long been the wish of General Parsons and the authorities of Connecticut, to break up this nest of the enemy. The following correspondence between Parsons and General Heath relates chiefly to this matter:—

HEADQUARTERS, CONTINENTAL VILLAGE,
October 18, 1781.

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 16th came to hand this day with the intelligence communicated by Joseph Mosely, for which I thank you. His intelligence is corroborated by others which I have received, and I believe it true in almost every particular.

The fleet of seventy sail seen by the privateer, is supposed to be a Spanish fleet going to Europe, the richest that ever sailed from America, said to have forty millions of dollars on board, which occasioned so strong a convoy.

I am happy to hear that you have nearly completed your business as I wish your return as soon as possible, the more so as Lord Stirling is gone to the northward, and General Howe has crossed the North River.

I should be happy in reducing the Works at Lloyd's Neck, but I think there is little prospect of its being done by militia or levies; it has been narrowly watched and would have been attempted before this time if it had been thought practicable by those who have the best knowledge of its situation &c.

Delancey's Horse, yesterday morning, surprised a Horse Guard near Croton River, carried off the guard, several wagoners and a number of horses. This and some other circumstances have induced me to direct Major Tallmadge to join Colonel Sheldon, to render the chain of troops on the lines more complete, and to reinforce the Horse, at present weak and much worn down by fatigue. No late news from the southward.

I am with great regard, Dear Sir &c.,
W. HEATH.

P. S.—I must repeat my wishes to see you as soon as possible.
To Major General Parsons.

TUESDAY, *October 23, 1781. 8 o'clock P. M.*

DEAR SIR.—This moment I received a letter from a person in whose information I have the fullest confidence, of which the following is an extract.

"The fleet, consisting of twenty-five sail of the Line, four of fifty and twelve frigates (no transports) were seen off the Neversinks last Friday afternoon. They have between six and seven thousand troops on board the Men of War. About three thousand are left to defend New York and its dependencies. There are five fire-ships with the fleet. Should these fail of doing execution and the French fleet keep possession of the Bay, the plan is to run along side and throw the troops on board. An express boat arrived at New York last Friday morning from Lord Cornwallis in twenty-four hours. He was surrounded by land and would soon be by water. General Washington's Works were within three hundred yards of his Lordship. Twelve thousand shells were thrown from our Camp before the express came away. His Lordship is short of ammunition and entirely out of rum, but they boast of large magazines of corn. A fleet of fifty-seven sail under convoy of a fifty gun ship and two frigates met the grand fleet at the Hook."

The informant left New York at 4 o'clock P. M. last Saturday.

I am Sir, your humble servt.,

To Major General Heath. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Continental Village.

HEADQUARTERS, CONTINENTAL VILLAGE, *October 23, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—By your representation of the state of the Post and garrison at Lloyd's Neck and other circumstances stated in your letter to me of this date, I consent to your making a trial for the reduction of the Post and garrison, if upon further inquiry and consideration it should still appear eligible without risking too much. With this you will receive orders to Colonel Sheldon and General Waterbury, each to furnish you with such detachment of troops as may be necessary, and for Captain Brewster to aid with all the public boats under his charge except one which he is to reserve for the purpose of collecting intelligence. If the State of Connecticut or any individuals should think proper to lend aid of vessels or boats at their own risk and expense, they may do it, but nothing of this kind is to be done at the risk or expense of the United States. Wishing you success,

I am with great regard, Dear Sir, &c.,

To Major General Parsons. W. HEATH, *M. General.*

HEADQUARTERS, CONTINENTAL VILLAGE, *Oct. 23, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Major General Parsons will apply to you for a detachment of the troops under your command for a particular purpose. You will please immediately on his call to furnish them properly officered and equipped.

I am with great regard &c.,

To Brig. Gen. Waterbury. W. HEATH, *M. General.*

HEADQUARTERS, CONTINENTAL VILLAGE, *October 28, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 26th with a plan of Fort Franklin, came to hand last evening. From the plan, the Work appears strong. The same apprehensions of danger which led the enemy to strengthen the Work, will probably lead them to vigilance. You must be the best judge of the probability of success from any art of strategem which you have or can avail yourself of, and the matter must be left much to your own discretion and the nature of things. I would not have the attempt made without such a prospect of success as will in a judgement of reason warrant the attempt.

The troops are good, and will attempt anything you bid them, but your judgement must determine the practicability; for in that the troops will place their confidence. I must confess, I have very little expectation of the Fort being taken by assault. The particular circumstances related by you the other day induced me to consent to your making a trial. Any change of circumstances will naturally lead you to a new consideration of the practicability or impracticability of the attempt, and you must act accordingly. If it is in your power to guide the enterprise in person, I do not object; you may in that also act your pleasure.

I wish it may be soon determined whether your proposed attempt on Fort Franklin is practicable or not, that the plan which I had in contemplation before you mentioned it may be carried into execution.

I am with great regard, Sir, &c.,

To General Parsons. W. HEATH.

HEADQUARTERS, CONTINENTAL VILLAGE, *October 31, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 30th was handed me this morning. I have before given my opinion fully on an attempt being made on the Post at Lloyd's Neck under the cover of shipping, unless it were out of the power of the enemy to send a superior naval force, which cannot be the case at present. The fleet having

returned to New York, the same objections subsist against every attempt on that Post except by surprise and strategem. The state of the moon and other circumstances for the present forbid all prospect of success in that way.

As the two hundred men were ordered under your command for the particular purpose of making an immediate attempt on Fort Franklin, and some other enterprises were meditating by Major Tallmadge and are now probably nearly ready for execution, Major Prescott with the troops under him must return under the command of Major Tallmadge. Those belonging to General Waterbury's brigade and others belonging to the Army must return to their respective corps immediately.

I am with great regard &c.,

To Major General Parsons. W. HEATH, *M. General.*

Heath, in this matter, showed the same timidity, hesitation, lack of enterprise and fear of assuming responsibility which in great part caused the failure of his attempt on New York in 1777. His half-hearted and uncertain support of Parsons invited defeat, and the ungracious tone of his refusal could only have embittered the natural disappointment resulting from the failure of a project from which so much had been hoped. The adverse influences inducing Heath to withdraw his co-operation and consent at the critical moment, may be inferred from the above letter from Heath to Parsons and from the following letter from General Parsons to his Excellency, Governor Trumbull, dated, Stamford, 8th Nov., 1781:

SIR.—The trust the Council were pleased to repose in me by their vote of the 10th of September, having given them reasonable expectations of information of the progress made in the execution thereof or the reason of the failure of any part of the proposed plan, I think it my duty to give your Excellency a detail of facts from the time I received your order until the expedition against the Post at Lloyd's Neck was laid aside, from which you will be able to know my embarrassments and the causes which I suppose conspired to defeat it. Immediately on my arrival in the western part of this State, I endeavored to inform myself particularly of the state of the enemy's Post at Lloyd's Neck and soon became satisfied of the practicability of taking the Fort, and that the only danger lay in coming off without the aid of a naval force. I informed General Heath of my being at Stamford and

of the object in view, and requested him to afford me such aid as he thought necessary. This letter Major Tallmadge sent accompanied with one of his own, the contents of which I don't know, I received an answer from General Heath disapproving of my continuing on the coast for that purpose; and at the same time Major Tallmadge received a letter from General Heath in which he says, he forbid him to obey any orders from any person but himself. This, however, I was not informed of either by General Heath or Major Tallmadge. Thus matters rested until I went to camp where I made a written representation to General Heath, a copy of which I have enclosed, on which he on the 23rd of October gave his orders to make the attempt to reduce that Post. I accordingly made every preparation to carry it into execution, and at considerable trouble and expense collected boats to transport the troops, and sent to New London to procure the shipping which we proposed to use for the purpose, but was determined to make the attempt without their aid if a fair opportunity presented before they arrived. Accordingly on the 27th and 28th of October we were prepared to embark and the weather proved favorable but on both those nights the enemy's shipping were under the north shore so as to prevent our going out without their observation; this happened by a privateer of ours being at Greenwich which they came to block up. On this disappointment I concluded to postpone the attempt to the 6th Novr. when the night might favor our attempt and we could have the aid of shipping, and accordingly went to New London for the purpose, where the owners of the armed vessels readily agreed to assist in the enterprise and to hazard their own vessels, viz: one ship of sixteen nine pounders; two brigs of sixteen six pounders; one brig of sixteen four pounders and one schooner of twelve four pounders, a naval force decidedly superior to that of the enemy in the Sound. Under these circumstances I expected to sail by noon the 4th Novr. but on the third received the enclosed countermanding order. I had acquainted Genl. Heath of my going to New London and the design; Major Tallmadge also waited on Genl. Heath at the same time; copies of the several letters and orders respecting this matter I have enclosed. I hope some more fortunate person will have permission to effect what has been denied to me and that this Post which has been so exceedingly detrimental to the State will be broken up.

I am with much esteem

Your Excellency's most obedt. Servt.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

November 11, 1781, General Parsons writes to Governor Trumbull as to the winter quarters of the Connecticut Division:—

SIR.—The troops going now into winter quarters and the borders of the State left unguarded except by State troops, will it not be a great saving to the State to have part of the Connecticut Line in Horseneck, the rest in New London and the State troops take the coast guard. I am convinced they can as well be spared as left in the Highlands; if you are of that opinion, I wish you to apply to General Heath.

I am with great esteem &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Nothing came of this suggestion, for the Division went into camp at "Connecticut Village," just back from Constitution Island, reoccupying the huts built there by the troops the year before. General Parsons' ill-health and his domestice affairs took him from camp during most of the season.

On July 10, General Parsons had written to the Board of War respecting the disabled soldiers of the Connecticut Line as follows:—

CAMP, *July 10, 1781.*

SIR.—I had the honor of a letter from the Board of War by Captain Weed, and was encouraged by that to expect a speedy determination of the Board respecting the officers who appeared proper subjects for the Corps of Invalids. As the Army has never taken the field and the officers became necessary in Camp, I am obliged to trouble you again on the subject, and request that the officers for whom certificates were transmitted may be transferred, that their places may be supplied with such as are able to do duty; with the addition of Captain Parsons, for whom certificates are enclosed. Of this number, Captains Parsons and Weed and Lieut. Belding would prefer going out on half pay, if it can be admitted. Captains Reed and Hodge prefer the Corps of Invalids, as do the other lieutenants who were named in my last letter. The many invalids and vacancies made by resignation since the arrangement in January, render it necessary that more officers should be soon appointed to do duty, which cannot be done until the determination of the Board of War is had respecting the invalid officers. This becomes more particularly necessary at this time, as I have every reason to apprehend the

resignation of much the greater part of my officers in a few days.

The State of Connecticut has fed them upon promises of advancing them some little part of their wages from January to this time, and after fixing particular periods from time to time for the payment, have finally disappointed them of every farthing they have promised; and 'tis now more than fifteen months since they received one farthing from the public and they really are wretched. Your answer by the return of the Post will oblige,

Your obedient servant,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

P. S.—Lieutenant Mix has come in since writing the above, and has so far recovered his health as to perform his duties in the field.

November 14, 1781, General Parsons writes to General Heath as to the disabled officers of the Connecticut Line:—

SIR.—Enclosed is a copy of a letter from the Board of War to me on the subject of disabled officers of the Connecticut Line, in consequence of which I have sent to Captain Parsons of the 3d Regiment, whose answer is enclosed, and to Lieut. Belding of the First Regiment, who accepts the offer of the Board and consents to retire. The proposals of the Board are understood to grant these retiring officers the privileges and emoluments which were granted to the retiring officers on the last reform of the Army. The other officers referred to have not yet given their answers. I have therefore to request that you will be pleased to report to the Board the consent of the before named officers to retire on the provision made for retiring officers on the late reform of the Army and that they be added to the list of the officers retiring on that reform, and that they have leave to return home that their offices may be filled.

I am Sir &c.,

To Major General Heath. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The following is the letter from Captain Parsons enclosed in the above:—

PEEKSKILL, *November 15th, 1781.*

SIR.—In consequence of provisions made by Congress for officers who, for sufficient reasons, wish to retire from the service, I think it my duty to inform your Honor that by reason of age and a constitution much impaired in service, I would wish to quit military

employments as soon as I can settle my affairs and be reasonably satisfied that I am entitled to the same emoluments that other officers are under the denomination of deranged officers in the year eighty. I shall wait further directions in the matter, and have the honor to be

Your obed't. serv't,

To Major General Parsons. DAVID PARSONS.

December 27, 1781, General Parsons wrote to General Washington on the same subject from Middletown in Connecticut, to which place he had removed his family:—

DEAR GENERAL.—After a long confinement to a sick bed, I have just recovered strength to be brought home, and am able to attend to a little business, though I have not strength to go abroad.

The Board of War in a letter to me of the 23d of October, directed that the disabled officers of the Connecticut Line, might, if they consented, go out of service as retiring officers, a copy of which letter is enclosed. I have applied to all those who were reported as disabled officers, of which number, Major Abner Prior, Captains Parsons and Weed, Lieuts. Belding and Farmer of the Connecticut Line, desire to retire upon the terms offered and request to be reported to the Board of War as retiring officers. Colonel Durkee and the others who are invalids, refuse.

I most heartily congratulate your Excellency on the important success of the campaign under your immediate direction, by which our Country must derive the greatest advantage if they have the spirit to improve this event properly.

I am with the greatest esteem,

Your Excellency's Obed't. Serv't,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

To his Excellency, General Washington.

April 10, 1782, General Parsons writes to General Horatio Gates:—

"I am happy to hear you again think of aiding our Country with your services in the field, and, from my former experience with your friendship, I am induced to request a place in your family for Captain Joseph Walker of the Third Connecticut Regiment. He has been with me from my appointment as Major General to this time. Finding myself unable to continue longer in the Army, I am unwilling to disappoint the expectations of so good a character in return-

ing him to his regiment. I think you will be satisfied with him on acquaintance."

Walker was the Aid-de-Camp who assisted Parsons in the Fairfield investigation, in which he displayed ability and good judgment. He graduated at Yale in 1765; December 15, 1780, was appointed Aid-de-Camp with the brevet rank of Major. Not having been continued as a staff officer, as he desired, he returned to his regiment and subsequently was appointed Brigade Major of the Connecticut Brigade.

The hardships and exposures of seven years' continuous service in the Army, dating from the Lexington Alarm in 1775, had so undermined Parsons' originally vigorous constitution, that, in the Spring of 1782, it became painfully evident to him that, however contrary to his inclinations, he must now no longer continue in active service. He accordingly determined to retire from the field, which he felt less reluctance in doing now that the war was virtually ended, knowing that his action would not be detrimental to the cause.

After the surrender of Cornwallis, Washington, at the request of Congress, had remained four months in Philadelphia. On the 23d of March he left for Newburgh, where he arrived April 1 and established his Headquarters. Here, upon his arrival, he was met by the Generals in camp, by Parsons among the rest, who appears from his correspondence to have at this time presented to Washington the reasons for his proposed retirement, and, satisfying him that they were insurmountable, to have gained his approval, for on April 3, upon his return to his quarters, Parsons issued to his old command the following parting order:—

DIVISION ORDERS, *April 3, 1783.*

It is with regret that Major General Parsons finds himself obliged to inform the Division of the army under his command that his health is so impaired, he feels himself totally unable to continue his connection with them any longer. Duty and Inclination would have led him to have accompanied them with his service to the end of the war had not the state of his Health been such as to put it out of his Power. He takes this opportunity to express his cordial attachment to the Interest and Welfare of the army in general and of this Division in particular. The Intimacy and friendship with

which he has spent seven years with many officers, and the harmony which subsisted with all, renders it affectionately painful to separate from them and has cemented an union which nothing but necessity should have interrupted—the feelings and pleasant remembrance of which nothing but Death shall obliterate. The Patience under disappointments and distresses, the obedience and attention to duty by which the Soldiers of the Connecticut Line have ever been distinguished, will redound to their lasting honor, and endears them to every friend to the liberties of our country.

The General begs the officers to accept his most hearty thanks for the many and repeated proofs he has received of their friendship and thinks it his duty to give his testimony to the fidelity, fortitude and persevering constancy of both officers and soldiers since he has had the honor to command; and though he feels deprived of the pleasure any longer to unite his personal exertions with theirs, yet his Heart shall be with them in contending for the object of our long and united struggle.

Congress had provided that officers upon being retired, should receive half pay for life or full pay for five years, a provision intended, not as a pension, but as compensation for services already rendered. But there was a question whether this provision covered voluntary retirements, which greatly perplexed Parsons and caused him to hesitate, lest by making his resignation absolute, he should deprive himself of his rights under the law. While determined to retire in any event, he was unwilling to throw away his claim to compensation if there was any way of avoiding it. He was ready to serve in an emergency should his health become restored, pending which he desired a leave of absence until such time as he should be regularly retired. His case was similar to that of General Putnam, who was disabled by paralysis in December, 1779, and never afterwards joined the Army, but was nevertheless carried on the rolls with full pay until the close of the war when he was retired on half pay for life. Washington, not deeming it within his powers to grant Parsons the kind of leave asked for, advised him to refer the matter to General Lincoln, then Secretary of War.

The following letters of May 17 and June 5, to Washington, were written for the purpose of arriving at some understanding by which General Parsons might avoid "precluding himself from all hope of satisfaction for former services."

MIDDLETOWN, *May 17th, 1782.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I received last week a letter from General Lincoln in answer to mine of the tenth of April on the subject of retiring from the army, in which he informs me that no general officer will be suffered to retire on the proposed derangement; and adds, if your want of health forbids your taking the field, I see nothing which will prevent your being indulged; this, however, is solely with the Commander-in-Chief.

By this letter I find myself reduced to the necessity of relinquishing my connection with the army without prospect of any compensation, or to request your Excellency's permission to continue in the country until I regain so confirmed a state of health as I may venture on the fatigues of a military life.

I am willing the whole, or such part as shall be thought just, of all pay and subsistence promised me by the public should be suspended whilst I continue absent; and should active service require more general officers in the field than will be in camp, I will join on notice, but in that case I would not wish to resume the command of my former Division as there will always be something disagreeable in any officer returning to a command he is supposed to have quitted.

As I feel myself at present totally unfitted to venture on the fatigues of the field, I would thank your Excellency for permission to continue in the country, otherwise I must make my resignation absolute and unconditional.

I am with great esteem,

Yr. Excellency's obt. servt.,

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

MIDDLETOWN, *June 5th, 1782.*

DEAR GENERAL.—You certainly fully understood me when you supposed me fixed in my determination of leaving the army at all events. The reasons I then assigned were such as I could not surmount, and they continue in full force at this time. But the matter being undecided when I last saw you, whether a derangement of general officers would take place agreeable to a resolve of Congress, and that being the only mode in which I could retire without relinquishing all hope of compensation for past services, it was your Excellency's advice to write to the Minister of War on this subject. On his answer to my letter, I wrote your Excellency the 17th of May and have received your answer of the 28th. My design was solely to know whether your Excellency, whom we justly esteem as our friend and patron, could not place me in such circumstances as

would answer my wishes without making my resignation absolute so as to preclude myself from all hope of satisfaction for former services.

On the subject of resuming a command again in the army, I meant to be understood that if any such emergency should happen that more general officers should be wanted than were at the time in service, I should not be averse to taking command again for a short time during the continuance of such necessity; but the reasons which prevailed with me to retire are still in full force against returning to a fixed stated command in the army.

And since tis not within your authority to grant me the indulgence requested, I must apply to Congress for the liberty I wish, or for an absolute discharge, which shall not be delayed longer than next post.

Colonel Durkee of the 1st. Connecticut regiment was buried last Thursday.

I am with sentiments of esteem, Dear General,

Yr. obedient servant,

To General Washington. S. H. Parsons.

The opinion of the Secretary of War being that voluntary retirements were not covered by the provisions of the statute, and the Commander-in-Chief not having authority to grant the kind of leave asked for, General Parsons made the following application to Congress:—

Middletown in Connecticut, *June 6, 1782.*

Sir.—After seven years' service in the Army of the United States, I find my health so far impaired as to forbid a further stated service in the field; and the Commander-in-Chief not being authorized to comply with my wishes on the subject, although he is desirous of granting me every indulgence he has authority for, I am compelled to turn to Congress with my request.

After so long a service in the Army of the United States, which I began with the purest motives, and to which I still retain the greatest attachment, I cannot feel myself willing totally to break my connection with them, and though I am convinced my health will not permit me to continue a stated service with them, perhaps, should events render it necessary for a greater number of officers of my rank to be in the field for a short time than will remain there, I may be able to perform that service. If that should be the case, I should be happy in having it in my power to continue my aid to the objects of my country's pursuit.

Under these circumstances I have to request of Congress leave of absence from the Army until called for, that I may have the means in my power of regaining and establishing my health, and that during my absence I may be at liberty to remain in the United States or go to foreign parts as I shall find most conducive to the purposes for which I request this indulgence.

In the meantime I am willing to relinquish the whole or such part of my public pay and emoluments as Congress in their wisdom shall judge proper.

But should this request be inconsistent with the views of the public, I then request leave to resign my commission and that Congress will please to grant me a discharge.

I am with great respect, Sir,
Yr. Excellency's obed't. servt.,
SAML. H. PARSONS.

To the President of Congress.

Congress not making a favorable response to his request for a special furlough, General Parsons, feeling that a release from service, for a time at least, was imperatively necessary in the present condition of his health, resigned his Commission as Major General in the Continental Army without conditions, which was duly accepted by Congress and an absolute discharge granted on the 22d of July, 1782.

Parsons was now forty-five years old and had served continuously as Colonel, Brigadier General and Major General since his appointment as Colonel of the Sixth Connecticut, April 26, 1775. In retiring from the Army, he must have carried with him a feeling of satisfaction that events had proven the correctness of his judgment when he advocated an appeal to arms. Great Britain had sent to America 112,584 soldiers and 32,000 seamen, and all that now remained to her of her great possessions, after the expenditure of so much blood and treasure, were the three ports of Charleston, Savannah and New York. She was too much exhausted to continue the war and too proud to make peace. The fall of Lord North's Ministry was the first acknowledgment of defeat, and with the new Cabinet came an entire change in the determinations of the Government respecting the war. This was not known at the time and for that reason there was no relaxation of vigilance during the year 1782, but the orders to Sir Guy Carleton, who

succeeded Clinton in the command at New York, were to begin preparations immediately for the abandonment of all his Majesty's possessions in the thirteen Colonies. In pursuance of these orders, Savannah was evacuated on the 11th of July and Charleston on the 14th of December, the American Army entering amid cheers and shouts of welcome. But New York remained in the enemy's hands until some months after the definitive treaty of peace had been signed, and the last British soldier did not sail until the 25th of November, 1783, when Washington and his troops made a formal entry into the city.

CHAPTER XXIV

William Heron of Redding and Sir Henry Clinton's "Secret Service Record"

1780—1781

The following letter, preserved among the Washington Papers in the State Department at Washington, was written by General Parsons three or four days after his visit to Headquarters at Newburgh, upon the General's return from Philadelphia:—

Danbury, *April 6, 1782.*

Dear General.—When last with you I forgot to mention the name of Mr. William Heron, of Redding, who has for several years had opportunities of informing himself of the state of the enemy, their designs and intentions with more certainty and precision than most men who have been employed; as I have now left service I think it my duty to inform your Excellency of this person, and my reasons for believing him more capable of rendering service that way than most people are, that he may be employed if necessary.

He is a native of Ireland, a man of very large knowledge, and a great share of natural sagacity, united with a sound judgment; but of as unmeaning a countenance as any person in my acquaintance. With this appearance he is as little suspected as any man can be; an officer in the department of the Adjutant General is a countryman and very intimate acquaintance of Mr. Heron, through which channel he has been able frequently to obtain important and very interesting intelligence; that he has access to some of their secrets a few facts will show beyond a doubt. Your Excellency will remember I informed you of the contents of a letter you wrote to Virginia which was intercepted a year ago but not published. This letter his friend shew him. Of the descent made last year on New London, I was informed by him and made a written representation of it to the Governor and Council three days before it took place. This he had through the same channel. He has frequently brought me the most accurate descriptions of the posts occupied by the enemy and more rational accounts of their numbers, strength

and designs than I have been able to obtain in any other way. As to his character I know him to be a consistent national whig; he is always in the field on every alarm and has in every trial proved himself a man of bravery; he has a family and a considerable interest in this State and from the beginning of the war has invariably followed the measures of the country. I might add as a circumstance of his fidelity his delivering a letter from General Arnold to Major André to me instead of bearing it where it was directed, which letter you have. In opposition to this his enemies suggest he carries on an illicit trade with the enemy; but I have lived two years the next door to him and am fully convinced he has never had a single article of any kind for sale during that time, nor do I believe he was in the most distant manner connected with commerce at that time or any subsequent period. I know many persons of more exalted character are also accused, none more than Governor Trumbull nor with less reason. I believe the Governor and Mr. Heron as clear of this business as I am, and I know myself to be totally free from everything which has the least connection with that commerce.

I think it my duty to give this full information of his character, that, if you should think it expedient to employ him, you might have some knowledge of the man that you might be better able to satisfy yourself if you send for him. I believe on conversation he would give you entire satisfaction.

I am, dear General, with the highest esteem,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

To General Washington. SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

When Heron asked his assistance in procuring a flag of truce to go into New York, Parsons, in his note to General Arnold of August 20, 1780, recommended him with similar expressions of confidence. "Mr. Heron is a neighbor of mine for whose integrity and firm attachment to the cause of the country I will hold myself answerable. I am certain he will conduct with strict honor every matter he undertakes." It was at this time that Arnold gave Heron the letter to Major André referred to in the foregoing letter, which Heron, suspecting something wrong, brought home to Parsons instead of delivering it in New York as requested.

Heron's home was on Redding Ridge where Parsons' family had lived for two years, having removed there at the time the

Connecticut Division was encamped at Redding in the winter of 1778-9. At this time Heron had become somewhat prominent, having been elected to the Legislature in 1778, and it was probably during this winter that Parsons first became acquainted with him. Finding that he had unusual opportunities for "informing himself of the state of the enemy," Parsons very soon began to employ him as a spy. So far as can be learned, Heron served him faithfully, furnishing more accurate and precise information than most men employed for that purpose, forewarning him of important plans of the enemy, such as Arnold's intended descent on New London in September, 1781, and bringing him Arnold's letter to André mentioned above.

But letters written by Heron to the British Commander in New York, found in the recently discovered manuscript of Sir Henry Clinton's "Secret Service Record of Private Daily Intelligence," disclose the fact that, at the time he was acting as a spy for Parsons, he was also communicating intelligence to the enemy, and that he enclosed in one of his own letters an alleged letter of Parsons in answer to one from himself, which he pretended was written under an arrangement by which Parsons was to furnish in this form "every material article of intelligence." These letters of Heron have been made the basis of a slanderous charge against Parsons of treasonable correspondence with the enemy. This charge is so utterly absurd and improbable and comes from such a prejudiced source, that it would never have been deemed worthy of notice had it not been carelessly repeated in more responsible quarters, and the act defended by the astonishing declaration that "if the historian is to consider all damaging uncorroborated statements, charges that ought to go for naught till other evidence is adduced, he will find that little history can be written." So stirred to indignation were Senator Hoar and our late Minister to Portugal, Hon. George B. Loring, that the latter, at the instance of Mr. Hoar, prepared a pamphlet in refutation of the charge, which has been pronounced unanswerable by such men as Judge Devens, George William Curtis, Wayne McVeigh, Judge McCurdy, Rev. Dr. Peabody and Senator Hoar, the latter of whom said to Mr. Loring, "You have rendered a greater serv-

ice to General Parsons than if you had saved his life." This pamphlet Mr. Loring dedicated to Gen. W. T. Sherman. In preparing this biography, the writer has discovered additional facts which materially strengthen Mr. Loring's argument, the statement of which in their proper connection is his apology for reopening the matter.

Heron's true character is certainly an enigma, but on its correct solution depends to a considerable extent the construction to be put upon his acts. The only letters of his known to be in existence are believed to be the few which appear in this chapter, and the inferences to be drawn from these and from the scanty facts concerning him which have come down to us, furnish the sole key to the problem. More full and precise information regarding him would be desirable, but from even the meager data at hand it is possible to arrive at a reasonably satisfactory conclusion.

Parsons describes Heron as "a man of very large knowledge, of great natural sagacity united with a sound judgment, but of as unmeaning a countenance as any person in my acquaintance." To have carried on for so long a time without exciting suspicion the double espionage which the "Record" seems to disclose, would have been impossible except for a genius in the detective's art. His letters show a remarkable grasp and comprehension of affairs, but he cannily fills them with his own views and opinions rather than with facts. Todd's history of Redding, written a hundred years after these events, represents him as a man of much ability and force of character, who sported a gold-headed cane, wore laced waist-coats, ruffles and velvet breeches, and whose favorite remark in speaking of the common people, was, "We must keep down the underbrush." He is said to have taught school and surveyed the old stage route from New York to Boston, and to have had great influence in public affairs. Todd states that when the British on their way to Danbury in April, 1777, halted near the church in Redding, Generals Tryon, Agnew and Erskine were invited into Esquire Heron's, who lived next the church, and entertained with cake and wine and many hopeful prognostications of the speedy collapse of the rebellion. He does not claim, however, that the "Squire" was at home, for Parsons says "he

was always in the field on the first alarm," nor that the Generals did not invite themselves in, when the ladies could not well have done otherwise than entertain them. But had Heron been at home hobnobbing with Tryon and proclaiming his friendship for the British, while poor Captain Betts (who lived opposite), and patriot James Rogers, and ten-year-old Jeremiah Sanford, were being seized by Tryon's soldiers and hurried off as prisoners (the poor lad dying two months later in the prison ship in New York), it is more than probable that some of the same Sons of Liberty who threatened to shoot good Rector Beach if he prayed for the King, would have retaliated on Heron with a halter, instead of sending him to represent them in the Connecticut Assembly in 1778, 1779, 1780 and 1781, and again after the war for the seven years beginning with 1784, and in 1795 and 1796, thirteen years in all. He could not have been, as Todd says the tradition is, "the recognized leader of the company of Tories on Redding Ridge," unless we suppose that posterity confounded aristocrats with Tories, but must have been believed by all to be, both during and after the war, what Parsons and Trumbull, Stark and Putnam, and the leading civil and military officers of the State evidently thought him, "a consistent National Whig," who "invariably followed the measures of his country," and "in every trial proved himself a man of bravery." Had he been thought otherwise, it would have been impossible that he should have been selected along with the most eminent and patriotic men in the State for the distinguished honor of a seat in the most important assembly up to this time held in Connecticut, the Convention for adopting the Constitution of the United States, in favor of which we find Heron's name recorded. Neither, in 1777, would he have been chosen by his town as one of a Committee "to hire soldiers to serve in the Continental Army;" nor, in 1779, have been appointed by the General Assembly one of a Committee to inquire into and estimate the losses of individuals at Norwalk in consequence of Tryon's raid; nor again, in 1780, to inquire into the conduct of persons employed in the Quartermaster and Commissary General's Departments, with power to remove delinquents. This much is certain, that we nowhere find the least suspicion of disloyalty attaching itself to his character,

or the least question raised as to his truthfulness and honesty. It is true that he was charged with illicit trading, but so were Clinton and Trumbull, and without a shadow of truth. Such charges were the resort of the guilty to cover their own operations. He had business interests in New York and many friends; one a countryman and very intimate acquaintance, who was in the Adjutant's Office; another, one McNeil, who, as Heron writes Parsons, January 5, 1781, "had almost closed the settlement of the late Mr. Thompson's estate and was ready to pay him a sum due him in compliance with a charge of Thompson's on his death bed." We find him going to New York in April, 1781, by a boat which was captured by the "Argo," and in June, as he says, by Parsons' assistance, and in July under a permit from Trumbull to cruise in the Sound. But Parsons, who knew Heron as a professional spy, as others did not, was well aware that these trips were for espionage and not for trade, and that they were the means by which was obtained the valuable information as to the Posts, strength and designs of the enemy which he was thus enabled to transmit from time to time to the Commander-in-Chief

Such was Heron as he appeared to the world—a man of high reputation and irreproachable character and faithful to the interests of his adopted country. The record of his treason, if such were his crime, and all that we know concerning it, is contained in the Robertson dispatch of September 4, 1780, (Colonial Documents of New York, Vol. 8, p. 804); in Heron's three letters and minutes of three conversations found in the stray volume of Sir Henry Clinton's Secret Record of Private Daily Intelligence, discovered in 1882 and published, with copious notes, in the "Magazine of American History," beginning October, 1883, and ending August, 1884, and in a letter to Clinton of March 4, 1782, printed in the October, 1888 number of the same magazine. The "Record" is a thin quarto blank book into which the reports of spies and secret agents were copied daily. It begins January 20, 1781, and ends on the 19th of the following July, nearly one-half of the book still being blank. The entries purport to be copies of supposed originals, but whether the supposed originals are genuine, or, if so, whether the copies are accurately made, no one knows; and unless both

are proven to be so, the entries alone of course, are no evidence of the truth of their contents. These letters, assuming them to be genuine and correctly copied, apparently convict Heron of treasonable correspondence with the enemy; apparently, I say, because it is by no means certain, however much appearances may be against him, that these letters do not merely disclose the methods of a shrewd, audacious spy in plying his trade. A close study of these documents in connection with contemporaneous events, impresses one very strongly that Heron's chief motive was not a desire to serve the enemy. His letters have an air of insincerity and lack the precision and directness which characterize most of the other entries in the "Record." He is very cautious in his statements; deals in generalities rather than particulars; in opinions rather than facts, never warns the enemy of important movements or gives information likely to affect their military plans. The intelligence he furnishes is usually vague, or immaterial, or already well known, and in strong contrast to that of other spies, which is generally fresh and up to date. His memory is apt to fail him as to important matters. Very little of the valuable information which he prepares and conceals in a hole in a wall for an assistant to remove, ever reaches Headquarters. He is always sorry, but it was not his fault. His reports are exceedingly interesting and gossipy, but the Adjutant General usually finds it necessary to supplement them with a series of pointed questions of his own.

In his conversation with General Robertson of September 4, 1780, Heron had much to say of Parsons' interview with Mr. Izard. This occurred two months before. Concerning the Continental Brigades, he cannot be positive. Connecticut has two—Parsons' and Huntington's; New Hampshire one—Poor's—which, last spring had but three hundred men, as he well knew. He does not recollect the Pennsylvania Generals. He had not heard what precise number had gone from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Washington's Army had ten or eleven thousand men last month.

February 4, 1781, he writes that the brigades in the Highlands "were not each six hundred strong, when I was there" (November or December, 1780, before the reorganization). He gives a minute account of Colonel Humphreys' attempt to

seize Sir Henry Clinton in New York on Christmas day, 1780. He states the object of the Convention held at Hartford in November, 1780. He also enclosed the minutes of the Assembly for December of that year.

June 17, 1781, he writes that he was in the Assembly the 14th of May, when letters of great importance from General Washington were read, setting forth the deplorable state of the troops at West Point and its dependencies, for want of provisions. "At this critical moment, Sir, I found myself in need of a confidential friend out of doors, who could convey hither this state of affairs; but it being early in the session, I did not dare leave my post." The same date he writes, "I prepared dispatches for you and left them at the appointed place, and I find they are taken away, but whether by Bulkley, or any other person, I know not. They contained, among other matters, an account of the intended route of the French troops; likewise an account of the state of West Point and its dependencies." And again, July 15; "It is not my fault that you have not heard from me before now. I left two packets at the place appointed, for Bulkley to take them, one on the 28th ult. and the other on the 4th inst. When I came to the place a second time, I was surprised to find the first packet there, but more so now when I found both there unmoved."

Heron's promises, as a rule, are largely in excess of his performance, and he always accompanies his reports with suspiciously loud protestations of zeal and loyalty, and never misses an opportunity for exaggerating the importance and value of his services, apparently for some ulterior purpose. In the report of his conversation with General Robertson, he says: "Till April last he was in the Assembly and a member for County correspondence; is now in office respecting the public accounts. He stands well with the officers of the Continental Army; with General Parsons he is intimate and not suspected." February 4th, he writes: "When I was in the Highlands, I spent a night with Parsons and another with Stark. I am on the best of terms with them both. The latter with his family, stayed a night at my house since." "There are few who are let into the secrets of the Cabinet, nor could I know them were it not for my intimacy with some of the principal officers in the

civil and military departments arising from my having been a member of the Legislature and being still continued one of a committee to examine staff accounts." April 24, he writes: "I shall be in a situation this summer to render essential service, having carried my election against Judge Sanford, one of the first families in the place. It is needless to observe that in the General Assembly of Connecticut enter all the material concerns of our political system; that secret advices from Congress, from Washington and from abroad are there canvassed, the early knowledge of which may be of consequence in order to avail yourself of it."

Neither does Heron in his letters fail to let fall some hint about money, which is always done in a most incidental and disinterested way. March 11, he speaks of Parsons' "mercenary disposition," intimating that money will be needed to bring him over. February 4, he says Parsons will expect for his services "a reasonable compensation for his commission." June 20, he says: "Something generous ought to be given in hand, but (in my opinion) not so much as I know he would ask. In this service it would not be amiss for me to be able to tell him what he may expect at present. I urge this to prevent his making an unreasonable and extravagant demand." July 15, "He will expect some money by me this time, but how to get it here I know not, as I would not wish to have any person besides yourself, or those you can confide in, made acquainted with anything of this nature. . . . Should any money be sent to our friend, it will be best to put it up in something like a belt." Evidently,

"He knew enough to annotate the Bible verse by verse,
"And how to draw the shekels from the British public purse,"

which seems to have been his main object, not for Parsons, however, but for himself.

The information which Heron furnishes Parsons, on the other hand, is of real and immediate service. Instead of indulging in extended essays on the situation, he brings "accurate descriptions of the enemy's Posts and rational accounts of their numbers, strength and designs." Instead of writing ancient history, he gives warning of proposed movements in time to

guard against them. Instead of useless prophecies as to the future, he brings home to Parsons, Arnold's letter to André, the delivery of which as requested, might have determined the fate of West Point. We hear no boastings or protestations, but he is "always in the field on every alarm, and in every trial proves himself a man of bravery."

There is no doubt, however, that after having as a member of the General Assembly, taken an oath that "he would to the utmost of his power, maintain and defend the freedom, independence and privileges of his State against all open enemies or traitorous conspiracies whatsoever," Heron did, if we may believe his statement, on the 17th of June, communicate to the British Headquarters a full and accurate account of what occurred in the Assembly during the previous month; for instance, that on the 14th of May, General Heath presented to the Assembly letters of Washington of the 10th and 12th, stating, among other things, the deplorable condition of the garrison at West Point for the want of provisions, and declared before the Assembly that the garrison must inevitably fall; and that on the 24th of May, upon the termination of the conference at Wethersfield between Washington and Rochambeau, a long letter from General Washington was read in the house stating the result of their deliberations, the plans and expectations of the campaign, and the assistance which must be rendered by the State. This act of Heron's was clearly treasonable and in violation of his oath, but even here he shows that he is still on the side of his country, for, it will be observed that in the first case, he delays the information until too late to be of any service, and in the second case, that he gives to Clinton such information only as he knows him to be already in possession of, the letters of Washington from the 27th to the 29th containing it, having been captured by the enemy. In this way he avoids doing harm to the cause of his country and at the same time craftily gains credit at Headquarters for great zeal in the cause of the King.

Although at times he hews dangerously close to the line, all the circumstances point strongly to the conclusion that Heron was an American spy, and that his espionage for the British was a mere pretence to aid him in procuring intelligence and

to enable him the more effectually to despoil the Philistines. Indeed, prominent as he was in the councils of his State, his interest and safety would not have permitted him to be otherwise than honest and straightforward with his own people, and, while it would have been comparatively easy for a man as shrewd and plausible as he to have imposed on Clinton, it would have been impossible to have deceived for any length of time, his neighbors and the high military and civil officers with whom his duties and privilege as a member of the Assembly brought him into constant contact.

Sir Henry Clinton was in person short, with a full face and prominent nose; his manners reserved, and, though polite, not popular with the world at large. He was regarded by many as more conspicuous for honesty, zeal and courage than military genius. He was accused of habitual indecision. His perceptions, certainly, were not the keenest, and it does not appear to have been difficult to deceive him. When Washington's dispatches of the 27th and 29th of May, 1781, containing accounts of the interview and plans agreed on with Rochambeau at Wethersfield on the 23d, were captured, Clinton thought them sent out to be intercepted and believed them false; while the letters which Washington sent in August to Greene with false statements of his plans, intending them to fall into the hands of the enemy, he believed to be true, and the Army had reached Elk River before he comprehended the object of the march. Sullivan denominated him the "Prince of Blunderers," and Livingston, at the time of the fall of Cornwallis, wrote, "I should be very sorry to have Clinton recalled, because, as fertile as that country is in the production of blockheads, I think they cannot easily send us a greater blunderbuss, unless, peradventure, it should please his Majesty himself to do us the honor of a visit." In the course of his visits to his friend in the office of the Adjutant General, Heron seems early to have discovered in the gullibility of the British Commander, a fruitful field for the exercise of his peculiar talents. Whether the "lusty, fat, ruddy young fellow" the Adjutant General is described to be, was any sharper than his Chief, we have no knowledge, although he had a disagreeable habit of presenting to his spies lists of written questions to be categorically answered, but neither he nor Clin-

ton was a match for Heron, who evidently had set out to work both for every dollar there was in them, and in so doing affected such zeal and apparently gave such full information that he was wholly unsuspected. The knowledge that Clinton had conceived the idea since the defection of Arnold, that it was possible for him to corrupt any American General, appears to have suggested to Heron as a profitable speculation, the scheme which occupies so much of his last three letters in the "Record," of pretending to be negotiating with Parsons "to lend his aid in terminating this unhappy war by an amicable reunion with the parent State."

This pretended scheme Heron brings to Clinton's notice during a conversation, presumably with the Adjutant General, Major DeLancey, at his office in New York, (a memorandum of which is entered in the "Record" under date of March 11, 1781) by casually mentioning that "General Parsons' Aid-de-Camp, whose name is Lawrence, is soliciting leave to come in to see his mother (then living on Long Island). He thinks it is in our power to tamper with him, and that from Parsons' mercenary disposition, there is little doubt of success." If Lawrence ever said this to Heron respecting General Parsons, he must have been and known Heron to have been, in the British interest, of which there is no evidence. Aside from the improbability of an Aid-de-Camp expressing such an opinion of the General upon whom to a great extent his advancement must depend, it is certain that the cautious Heron, if he were a British spy and desirous of corrupting Parsons, would never confide the fact to Parsons' Aid-de-Camp, unless he were a co-conspirator, which is not claimed; and Lawrence, ignorant of the fact, would never have presumed to suggest to Heron that he could successfully tamper with Parsons, or imagine that he had any object in doing so. Furthermore, officers of neither army were in the habit of soliciting leave to enter the enemy's lines even to see their mothers. It is safe, therefore, to assume that the alleged remark was never made by Lawrence, but that the whole was an invention of Heron's to further his own purposes. But the bait, artificial though it was, Clinton greedily swallowed, and we find that late as March, 1782, when Parsons had practically left the Army, Heron was able, and doubtless found it to his profit, to

keep up the deception. How he justified his scheme, Heron does not inform us, but probably on the ground that, like many other Connecticut people, he was merely carrying on a private war with the enemy. To show the kindly relations existing between General Parsons and his Aid-de-Camp, and the utter falsity of Heron's statement as to Lawrence, the following letters are introduced; the first asks a favor of Governor Clinton for Lawrence, who seems to be well and favorably known to the Governor, and the second and third to Trumbull ask a return of the permit for Lawrence and acknowledge its receipt.

MIDDLETOWN, *September 7, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—The bearer, Major Lawrence, waits on you upon the particular circumstances of his case—his estate in the hands of the enemy and he destitute of any means of subsisting himself. I need say nothing to you of him personally, as you know him and his character fully.

He is offered a quantity of goods from New York on his estate, which will, from the interest arising from it, be able to support him with decency. This offer he cannot accept without your consent and permission to bring out the goods. The Council of this State, to whom he has applied, informs me that he being a subject of your State, your permission ought to be granted, and, on such permission, they will give every necessary aid he wants, and that they are convinced of the propriety of the grant.

As the principles on which he applies are such as obviate all the material objections to receiving goods from that quarter, and perfectly coincide with the principals on which individuals have had liberty to bring out their effects, and public bodies, particularly your own State, have supplied necessary clothing for their troops, I cannot doubt your granting him the license desired, as no payment is to be made till the war ends, supplies of money or provisions seeming to be at an end in this case.

I cannot entertain a doubt of your friendship for him or me, and have full confidence in your compliance with his request, and am with the greatest friendship and esteem,

Dear Sir, Your most obed't. servt.,

To Governor Clinton. SAML. H. PARSONS.

DANBURY, *October 11, 1781.*

SIR.—Pursuant to your advice, Major Lawrence has prepared what articles he can procure, principally woolens and linens, and

waits for the permission of Governor Clinton which I left with your Excellency at Lebanon to procure the confirmation of the Council, since which I have not heard of it. I must beg you to send that permission with the doings of the Council, by the bearer, as his whole interest now lies at great hazard, and should he not be possessed of his permit by the last of this week, it is probable he will be ruined.

The British fleet has not sailed, nor will they be ready to sail soon. They appear to be using their greatest exertions to fit for sea, but as General Washington opened his batteries against Lt. Gen. Cornwallis the 26th ult, 'tis probable the matter will be decided before they can relieve them. I am with esteem &c.,

To Governor Trumbull. SAML. H. PARSONS.

October 15, 1781, Major Lawrence has received the permit of the Council and will conform to it.

The following letter from Heron to the Adjutant General of the British Army, taken from the "Record" gives an elaborate account of the beginning and progress of his pretended negotiation with Parsons. On this occasion, Heron appears to have sailed from Stamford in his own boat and been captured about the 20th by the British brig, "Argo." On the 23d he was given a passport into the city, and on the 24th, wrote this letter. He did not return until after the 27th, reaching Redding May 1.

24th April, 1781.

SIR.—The business I had to negotiate with Gen'l P———s, after my return home, I paid the utmost attention to, and in order to break the ice (as says the vulgar adage) I found myself under the necessity of summoning what little address I was master of, in order to secure myself a retreat, should the matter I had to propose prove disagreeable to P———s. Therefore after giving him a satisfactory account of my commercial negotiation (which I knew would be alluring to him) I introduced the other branch of my business in the following manner. I told him that in justice to the confidence he reposed in me, I conceived myself in duty bound to conceal no material circumstance from him which may in any respect affect him. Impressed with this sense, I begged leave to communicate the substance of a conversation I had with a gentleman at New York, whom I knew to be in the highest confidence with the commander-in-chief. This gentleman, I told him, hearing of my being in town

with a flag and knowing I had many friends in it, who, notwithstanding our differing in political sentiments, were attached to me, he, therefore made use of some of them to acquaint me that he wished for an interview for the purpose of conferring on a subject the nature of which was in no way inconsistent with strict honor. I accordingly waited on him at the appointed hour when a conversation of the following import occurred:

"I understand," said the gentleman, "that you are intimately acquainted with G———l P———s." I answered in the affirmative. "Don't you judge him to be a gentleman possessed of too much understanding and liberality of sentiment to think that the welfare of his country consists in an unnatural alliance with the Enemies to the Protestant religion, a perfidious nation, with whom no faith can be long kept, as all the nations of Europe have experienced?" I answered that I knew G———l P———s to be a gentleman of abilities, but could not judge of his feelings toward that nation, otherwise than by observing no great cordiality subsisting between him and the gentry of that nation in our service. "The terms offered by the parent state," continued the gentleman, "are so liberal and generous, that I wonder at any gentleman of an enlarged and liberal mind giving his assistance in prolonging the calamities of his Country, and as General P———s is well known to possess these talents as well as great influence in the army and country, Government would wish to make use of him for the laudable and honorable purpose of lending his aid in terminating this unhappy war in an amicable Reunion with the parent State; should he undertake it, Government will amply reward him, both in a lucrative and honorary way and manner——" "Besides," I super-added, "making a provision for his son." Thus, Sir, have I been necessitated to use all this circumlocution in order to convince him of the delicacy observed in making the above propositions, and that nothing was intended inconsistent with the purest priciples of honor.

During this conversation I observed that he listened with uncommon attention, and as it grew very late, he said it was a matter which required deliberation; he therefore postponed it to another opportunity.

Next morning he sent for me and resumed the subject of our last or preceding night's discourse. He said he had weighed the matter and found himself, upon the strictest examination, disposed to a reconciliation and to effect which he would use his influence and lend his aid to promote it, but that he saw the embarrassments in his way in regard to inculcating such principles in the army, though

he did not doubt but in time he could bring the officers of the Connecticut Line over to his opinion. That in order to effect it he thought he could do it more to the purpose by resigning his commission, which would save every appearance of those honorary ideas, inseparable from the military profession; that he would draw after him the officers above referred to, who look up to him as a father, and that their joint influence would be exerted among the citizens, which would turn the tables in favor of Government in our State, but in consideration of those services, he must have a reasonable and meet compensation for his commission, it being all he had to depend upon.

Thus, Sir, have I given you a faithful account of this business and shall wait on you for your further direction at any hour you may please to appoint, when I may have the honor of relating other circumstances relative to it, which would be rather tedious to commit to writing. . . .

I am &c.,

To Major DeLancey. W. H.

I have no hesitation in pronouncing this negotiation with Parsons wholly fictitious—an invention of Heron's without any basis of fact—a deception put upon Clinton for the purpose of obtaining money under the pretence of its being needed to influence Parsons. The facts, I am confident, will bear me out. Heron does not state when this conversation with Parsons occurred, only that it was after his return home, which must have been subsequent to March 11, at which time he was in New York, and before April 21, the date of his next appearance there. How long after May 11 he remained in New York does not appear, but it is safe to assume that he did not reach Redding until after the 15th. On his April visit to New York his boat was captured on the 20th; he must, therefore, in order to have had sufficient time to prepare his commercial venture and cross the Sound, have left Redding as early at least as the 15th. The time within which the conversation might have taken place is thus narrowed down to the period between March 15 and April 15. Except the ten days he was engaged in his expedition against the "Outlaws of the Bronx," Parsons was in camp in the Highlands, fifty miles from Redding, from December until the 28th of February, when he left Camp under orders from Washington to investigate the Tory

plots in Fairfield County. This kept him busily employed and on the move until March 14, when he made his report, in which he suggests that his Aid-de-Camp, Captain Walker, be left to prosecute inquiries while he returns to Camp. Worn out with his exertions, General Parsons, almost immediately after this was taken seriously ill with a malarial fever. March 23, he writes to Washington, "that being seized with a fever a few days ago, I am at present unable to stir abroad." March 30, Captain Walker writes to Washington in his own name, "I am sorry to inform you that Major General Parsons is so reduced by his illness and at times so far deprived of his reason, as makes it impossible for him to transact the business which your Excellency expected. In the first of his illness he referred the whole business to me in hopes at that time of being able to attend himself in a few days, but I fear he will not this several weeks." April 4, Major Wyllys writes that "General Parsons lies on a sick bed at Redding, we fear dangerously ill, which is unfortunate for us. He may not be here for a month." On the 20th, Parsons writes to Washington giving an account of his sickness; and on the 30th, "The fever has left me exceedingly weak and unable to attend to any business of importance." Since the alleged conversation, detailed in this letter, must have taken place, if ever, some time between the middle of March and the middle of April, during which time Parsons was seriously ill and at intervals delirious, what probability is there that it took place at all? If Parsons ever said the things attributed to him by Heron in his letter of April 24, it must have been during his delirium, for he was never known to utter or entertain any such sentiments when he was himself. Instead of considering how he could best serve Great Britain, he was creating the wildest excitement among the Tories by his investigations, as is shown by the examination of Andrew Bennett on March 10; and Elisha Rexford writes from New Haven on the 9th of April, "that the Tories dread to have examinations of individuals, especially by General Parsons or a Court Martial. Whig people our way highly approve of what General Parsons has done, and say this is the way to manage the disaffected, to frustrate their schemes and save the country."

Heron's letter contains within itself evidence of being a fabri-

cation. It was obviously written to impress Clinton and not to tell him the truth. He says that he introduced his business by giving Parsons an account of his commercial negotiation (which he knew would be alluring to him). As Heron went to New York in his own boat, this "commercial negotiation," if such there was, could have been nothing but illicit trading, and Parsons, who had for years been trying to break up the practice, was the last person in the world he would have wished to know it. Moreover, this statement is in effect flatly contradicted by Parsons in his letter recommending Heron as a spy, for had Heron ever told him that he was engaged in illicit trading, he never would have written thus positively to Washington:

> Heron's enemies suggest that he carries on an illicit trade with the enemy, but I have lived two years next door to him and am fully convinced he has never had a single article of any kind for sale during that time, nor do I believe he was in the most distant manner connected with commerce at that time or any subsequent period. I know many persons of more exalted character are also accused, none more than Governor Trumbull, nor with less reason. I believe the Governor and Mr. Heron as clear of this business as I am, and I know myself to be totally free from everything which has the least connection with that commerce.

The conversation between Heron and a gentleman in New York, detailed in the letter of April 24, may have occurred, for it was exactly what the mention of the alleged remark of Lawrence was intended to bring about; but when Heron represents Parsons as saying "that he found himself, upon the strictest examination, disposed to a reconciliation, to effect which he would use his influence and lend his aid," he represents what might possibly have been believed by Clinton, but what would have been ridiculed by Parsons' friends, who knew that of all the leaders of the Revolution no one was more hostile to reconciliation than he, or more determined that the contest should not end until Independence should be acknowledged by Great Britain; and when he further makes him say "that he would draw after him the officers of the Connecticut Line who look up to him as a father, and that their joint influence would be exerted among the citizens, which would turn the tables in

favor of Government in our State," he suggests something so absurd and quixotic that it is incredible that the British Commander, even at Livingston's and Sullivan's estimate, could have read it without a consciousness of being imposed upon. And then, in his usual indirect manner, Heron introduces the subject of money: "but in consideration of these services he must have a reasonable and meet compensation for his commission, it being all he had to depend upon," which Heron knew to be false, but it would furnish a reason for larger demands. The audacity and monumental assurance of Heron in putting this trick upon Clinton, is paralleled only by the credulity of those who have given credence to his lies.

The practical mind of the Adjutant General seems not to have been satisfied with mere talk, for we find under date of next day a memorandum of the following conversation between Major DeLancey and Heron:—

25 April, 1781.

Memorandum taken of a conversation with Hiram [Heron].

He promises to get from General Pa———s the following information:—The exact state of West Point. What troops. What magazines. What new Works and how many guns. Who commands. If there is a boom below Fort Clinton. He is to let me know what P———s' wish is, how he can serve him and the methods he means to point out himself. He is to tell him he can no way serve us so well as continuing in the army; that the higher his command, the more material service he can render. He is to promise him great rewards for any services he may do us. He is to hold up the idea of Monk to him, and that we expect from his services an end to the war. That during the time he continues in their army he shall have a handsome support, and should he be obliged to fly, to remind him of the example and situation of Arnold. I am to hear from him on Friday next, when he will let me know how far he has operated on Pa———s. I shall tell him further what steps to take. He is to go to Hartford and attend the Assembly, from whence he will collect minutes, and in the month of June will transmit them to the General. He makes no doubt of bringing Par——s to do what we wish.

Heron's deception seems to have been successful, but in view of what he states as to his progress with Parsons, he seems to

have taken a pretty large contract, and nowhere does he claim that he has been able to fulfil it.

After the capture of his boat by the "Argo" on the 20th, Heron was not released until he had communicated with Headquarters. Three letters passed between Lieut. Colonel DeWurmb of the Yagers and Major Kissam, in reference to his detention and release, which the Editor of the "Record" introduces at the close of his annotation of the Heron letters as corroborative evidence of the charge he makes against Parsons. None of them refer to Parsons, except the following, dated,

WESTBURY, *April 23, 1781.*

SIR.—I enclose a passport for Mr. Heron and should wish for his return to Stamford whenever the wind will permit of it. I have not yet received any answer from New York, but as soon as those things wanted by General Parsons shall arrive, I will not fail to forward them by another flag.

I have the honor to be with great regard, Sir, Yours &c.,

L. J. A. DEWURMB, *Lt. Col.*

What is meant by the "things wanted by General Parsons," must be left to conjecture. He may have sent for medicines or clothing for the use of prisoners, but the probable explanation is, that an unauthorized use was made of Parsons' name to obtain "those things" which Heron wanted. At any rate, the things must have been wanted for a legitimate purpose, for there was no concealment about the transaction and evidently neither DeWurmb nor Kissam regarded it as anything unusual or suspicious, as certainly would have been the case had the "things" been ordered for private use; for, it must be remembered, these officers were entirely ignorant of the alleged negotiation with Parsons and could not have known of any wish to grant him unusual favors.

How the reference in this letter of the 23d to "those things wanted by General Parsons," about which nothing further is said or known, can corroborate the charge of an offense based wholly upon Heron's letters, an offense which Heron in his communications of the 24th and 25th does not pretend has yet been committed, I fail to see; but I can understand how this correspondence might be made to appear to the unobservant or

indifferent reader corroborative proof, by introducing it only at the end of the annotations, so that it would seem to relate to matters subsequent and not prior to Heron's letters. I can also understand, how, by following up the Kissam letters with garbled extracts from Trumbull's letters to Washington of the 9th and 17th of July, 1781, the report which Parsons made to Washington of the alarming disaffection in the Connecticut Line, could be made to appear an additional evidence of disloyalty, when the complete correspondence passing between Washington, Parsons and Trumbull on the subject of the report, (see Chap. XXII) shows that Parsons, strongly supported by Washington, was patriotically and successfully urging his State to grant that justice to his troops, the inexcusable delay in which was threatening the very existence of the Line. Thimble-rigging with facts is never resorted to, to support a strong case.

Heron on his return to Redding, May 1, brought to Parsons the very important intelligence obtained in New York, which he communicated to Washington in his letter of May 2. On the 17th of June, Heron was again in New York, where he writes the following letter to the Adjutant General, Major DeLancey:—

NEW YORK, *Sunday, June 17, 1781.*

SIR.—Being somewhat recovered from the fatiguing riding last night till 12 o'clock, I sit down to give you the heads only, (to avoid prolixity) of such matters as have fallen within my observation since I had the pleasure of seeing you last. Soon after my return home, I prepared dispatches for you and left them at the appointed place, and I find they are taken away, but whether by Bulkley, or any other person, I know not. They contained amongst other matters an account of the intended route of the French troops, the place of their destination and the ground on which they were to encamp. Likewise an account of the State of West Point and its dependencies. This early notice I had from G———l P———s, who had it from the French Officers who had been viewing the place of encampment. . . .

The "state of West Point" is one of the items of information which Heron, on his last visit to New York, promised to get from General Parsons, but he does not say that the information contained in the "dispatches" was obtained from him,

or any other information except that regarding the route, destination and camping place of the French. Indeed, by particularizing one item as that furnished by Parsons, Heron, by implication, states that the other items came from another source; and I here call attention to the fact that in none of his letters or conversations does Heron claim that he has had from Parsons any of the intelligence he communicates, excepting this unimportant item as to the French troops. As Heron did not obtain the promised information from Parsons, and the alleged dispatches were never received at Headquarters, it is safe to assume that they were never prepared, and that the claim that they were was made merely to gain time. Heron in this letter also gives information as to what occurred in the Connecticut Legislature a month previous, and the substance of Washington's Circular written May 10 and read the 24th. He has an estimate of the expenses of the current year, but has not dared to bring it with him (and never intended to). The French, he says, are on their march, a thing everybody knew. Of General Parsons he further says:—

G——l P——s assisted me in coming here now. We concerted measures for our future conduct with regard to conveying such intelligence as may come to his knowledge. I find him disposed to go some lengths (as the phrase is) to serve you, and even going thus far is gaining a great deal. But I, who am ever jealous of intriguing persons, especially in this cause, fearing the measures calculated to promote the interest of Government may be frustrated or thwarted by them, and myself made an instrument of fraud in a cause, for the support of which I have hazarded everything, have, therefore, exerted all the perspicacity I am master of, to analize (so in the MS.) the gentleman in question, and find he will not at present explicitly say that he will go such lengths as I could wish. I know the scruples he has to struggle with, those of education, family connections and military ideas of honor. But interest, together with the prejudices now subsisting between the Army and the State, rather than principle, may overcome these. Thus have I dealt with you with faithfulness and sincerity (as I think it my duty) and leave the improvement of the foregoing hints to your own superior judgement.

Meantime I remain, Sir
Yr. most obt. & very hbl. servt.,
W. H.

Heron does not write so hopefully of Parsons in this as in his previous letter, and apparently thinks that he has gone too fast. The Adjutant General noticing this, on the 20th, in consequence of a conversation with Heron the night before, puts to him in writing the following very pointed question: "Is it your opinion that Gen'l. P———s will enter so heartily as to make us hope he will take an open, determined step in our favor?" In reply to this Heron writes:—

It is my opinion that he does not wish to take an open and avowed part at present, however determined he may appear to be (and is really so) to communicate any material intelligence in his power, to inculcate principles of reconciliation, and detaching his subordinate officers from French connection. I have no authority to say that he will give up any Post or men committed to his care. This in my opinion must depend upon future contingencies and the adverse turn their affairs are like to take; for, were he sure that Independence would take place, his prospects as a general officer would be so great from the country, that they would outweigh every other consideration. . . . I have on a former occasion described the man to you, his local attachments, his scruples, his prejudices, and talents at intrigue; and, as he has already embarked half way, your own acquaintance with the human heart will enable you to judge whether it is not probable that in time he will go through the several gradations you would wish and expect of him. To effect this something generous ought to be given in hand, but (in my opinion) not as much as I know he would ask. His expectations may be raised. It is for you to judge how much you would be willing to give at present as and adequate reward for what I have given you reason to expect; and I find myself disposed to fall short rather than raise your expectations, as I think it the more pardonable error of the two. Whatever you are willing to give, shall be my business to safe convey.

This is such a bald attempt to obtain money under false pretences, that it would seem impossible for anyone but an extremely innocent person to dream of taking Heron seriously. The prudence of Heron's reply, "I have no authority to say that Parsons will give up any Post or men committed to his care," is very noteworthy for had he committed himself by naming any Post or men, he would have furnished the Adjutant with a test of his sincerity which would have speedily ended his career as a British spy.

To determine the efficiency of Heron's bureau of information, the Adjutant General gives him twelve general heads of "what we could wish our friend should inform us of."

1. The state of the American Army.
2. The state of the French Army.
3. How each Army is situated.
4. What enterprise they mean to undertake, and the method of counteracting them.
5. What supplies and from whence they expect to subsist.
6. Where the magazines are, and how to be destroyed.
7. The movement of the French fleet and their intentions.
8. News from the Southward of consequence.
9. The situation of the different forts.
10. News from Europe.
11. The hopes of the ensuing campaign.
12. As much of the correspondence between General Washington and the Congress as possible.

The above are general heads. His own knowledge will point out any further information that may be of use, and I hope his zeal will make these communications frequent.

To which Heron replies:—

The several heads from the first to the twelfth inclusive shall be attended to; but as I may not retain them, and it not being safe to carry such minutes out with me now, it will be best to send them out to Bulkley and order him to leave them at the usual place, (a hole in the rocks or stone fences). They ought to be in cypher. I shall look for them back about the 28th inst. and shall collect such intelligence (to convey back by the same hand) as I find are deserving of notice. The necessity of our friend's giving me frequent and particular information of every occurrence in order to transmit them here shall be urged. Nothing shall be wanting on my part that may tend to beget in him a firm and perfect reliance on those offers you are pleased to authorize me to make. The ascendency I have over him, the influence I have with him, the confidence he has already reposed in me, the alluring prospect of pecuniary, as well as honorary rewards, together with the plaudits of a *grateful* nation, shall all be combined together and placed in a conspicuous point of view, to engage him heartily in the cause. I know of no better method to try his sincerity than for him to select out of the foregoing heads,

from the first to the twelfth inclusive, such as he can give proper and precise answers to, and intrust me with the care of communicating them. In this service it would not be amiss for me to be able to tell what he may expect at present. I urge this to prevent his making an unreasonable and extravagant demand.

The clerk who entered this letter in the "Record," underscored the word "grateful," evidently amused at the kind of gratitude a compliance with Heron's wishes was likely to inspire and the kind of plaudits Parsons was likely to receive. The Adjutant General, evidently not entirely satisfied with Heron's assurances and desirous of putting him to a further test, adds:—

As it is necessary I should report to the Commander-in-Chief, he will think the business in no great forwardness unless I could give him some marks of the sincerity of our friend's intentions. To you I leave the method of procuring it.

Heron is now in a predicament. He must without delay get something from Parsons to show Clinton, or his deception will be exposed. As usual, he proves equal to the emergency. He writes privately to Parsons, or pretends to have done so, and uses his reply, or what he pretends is his reply, to prove the sincerity of Parsons' intentions. It is not known that there ever was any special intimacy between Parsons and Heron or any considerable correspondence. This reply, if genuine, is the only letter known to be in existence which purports to have been written by Parsons to Heron; and only two letters have come to light written by Heron to Parsons; one found among the Trumbull papers, dated January 5, 1781, in which Heron writes to Parsons, then with the Army in the Highlands, "that one, McNeil had written him from New York that he had almost closed the settlement of the late Mr. Thompson's estate and was ready to pay him a sum due in compliance with a charge of Thompson on his death bed. He urges his need of money and wants a flag of truce to get to New York." Whether this was an honest request or not, is not known, but he does not appear to have been successful, for in his letter of February 4 to Major DeLancey, he says, "I find myself disappointed in the

hopes and expectations I entertained, when I wrote you last, of seeing you ere now in New York. I cannot obtain a flag of truce." This must refer to his attempt of January 5, for he further says, "I have made a journey to Hartford and one to Camp," which he could not well have done and also gone to New York after January 5. The journey to Camp was made, probably, for the purpose of securing a flag. The second letter, which is such as might pass between any two public men and relates merely to the resolutions of the Assembly respecting the Army and the difficulties encountered in the election of delegates to Congress, is as follows:—

REDDING, *November 7, 1779.*

SIR.—I should have done myself the pleasure of transmitting you a copy of the resolve of the Assembly respecting the Army's being made good, but judging the copy I transcribed for Colo. Swift has reached you ere now, as that gentleman left Hartford before I did.

The Assembly's committee appointed to adjust those matters, are to meet the officers of the Army at Durham (I think) sometime in December next. All private donations, gratuities or moneys advanced with a view to encourage men to enlist, are not to be accounted any part of the men's wages; but such sums as have been advanced by public communities on the principle of making their wages good.

The delegates who represented this State in Congress the year past, have their powers of representation continued to them till the first of March next; this is owing to our making no choice or not electing a proper number in which both houses could agree. Much time has been spent in debating, conferring, considering and reconsidering this business of electing new delegates, but unhappily a concurrence could not be had, so that they (both houses) found themselves under an absolute necessity of continuing the old ones for a limited time as above hinted, hoping, doubtless, that by the next adjourned session (which is on the first Thursday in Jan'y. next), they will get into better humor. The lower House, in the first place, made choice of seven delegates whose names I shall not trouble you with, as you undoubtedly have their names already. The upper House concurred, with an alteration in the arrangement or order in which their names stood, placing the old delegates, or those who were in Congress heretofore, first in the Roll, notwithstanding their being lowest in the nomination; this being a matter of precedency or rather punctilio which that Hon'ble House thought proper to attend to. On the other hand, the lower House deemed it an infringement on the rights of

the body of the Freeman, therefore they could not concur with the upper House in the alteration made in the arrangement. Thus matters stood from day to day until the lower House finally came into the arrangement.

But a new difficulty now arises from Mr. Hosmer and Mr. Law declining to serve, their places being filled up by the Upper House in the persons of Colo. Dyer and Mr. Sherman, and sent into the other House for a concurrence about seven o'clock last Friday night at a time when most of the members were gone; this occasioned their finding themselves under a necessity of continuing the old ones as I have already mentioned. Many people who are best acquainted with the connection of certain personages make no scruple in saying that a great deal of chicanery and intrigue has been used in this business. A bill passed both Houses empowering any two of our delegates in Congress to meet in a general convention of delegates from all the States, the Carolinas and Georgia excepted, at Philadelphia next month in order to agree on a limitation of prices of goods, produce &c. How the gentlemen will like to descend from their Congressional character to a Conventional one, I know not. Thus have I thrown the foregoing hints together for your present information which you'll doubtless have more correct ere long.

I am, Sir, with great esteem
Your most Obedt. Servt.,
WM. HERON.

To the Hon'ble Brigadier Genl. Parsons, at Peekskill.

Heron's letter to Major DeLancey in which he enclosed the alleged Parsons letter, is dated July 15, 1781, and written in New York whither he had come, as he says, "under the sanction of a commission from Governor Trumbull to cruise in the Sound." Apparently answering a complaint from DeLancey that he had failed to send the information promised on his last visit, he writes:—

It is not my fault that you have not heard from me before now. I left two packets at the place appointed for Bulkley to take them; one of the 28th ult., the other of the 4th. inst. When I came to the place a second time I was surprised to find the first packet there; but more so now when I found both there unmoved.

Heron seems to understand the convincing character of a lie with the circumstances, and does not hesitate to use it in excus-

ing his failure to DeLancey. The hole in the wall, into which these packets were to be put, was plainly not too small for Heron to crawl out of.

"Soon after my return from New York," he continues, "I had an interview with our friend, and after acquainting him of the nature of these services expected from him, (at least so far as I could recollect the heads of the Queries you last showed me), we concerted measures for his conveying to me every material article of intelligence. The enclosed is the first essay of the kind, which serves to show the manner and the style in which he is to write—as to a confidential friend anxious to know those matters and occurrences which in anywise affect the cause of our country."

If this "interview" ever occurred, which seems far from probable, it must have been between the 20th of June, at which time Heron was still in New York, and the 8th of July, the date of the alleged Parsons letter. Heron says it was soon after his return home (not on his way home), so that he must have returned to Redding before seeing Parsons. On the 28th of June and again on the 4th of July, Heron claims that he left dispatches at the hiding place, which was near the Sound, sixty or seventy miles from Peekskill, where Parsons was busily engaged at the time in preparing for the movement of the 2d. From the night of the 1st to that of the 5th of July, the Army was on its march to New York and in the presence of the enemy, so that from the 28th of June to the 5th of July, an interview with Parsons would have been very difficult if not impracticable; and none appears to have taken place after the 5th, for the pretended letter, as itself states, was sent by a messenger. This interview, therefore, if had at all, must have been had previous to the 28th. Heron nowhere mentions the time he left New York, but it must have been after the 20th, and he may have left so late, that his visit to the hiding place on the 28th, was made on his way home. If so, he could not have seen Parsons at all. Had he left New York on the 21st, which was the earliest day he could have done so, he would scarcely have reached home before the 22d or 23d, and would have had but four or five days in which to ride to camp and back, nearly ninety miles, a journey he does not claim to have made and which in

the extreme heat he was not likely to have attempted; and had he made it, he must have arrived amid the hurry and confusion of preparations to march—a most inopportune time to plot treason, as he would be well aware. In view of these facts, it is difficult to resist the conclusion, that the interview in question is a myth, and the alleged arrangement for conveying intelligence a figment of Heron's imagination. It was a shrewd move on the part of Heron to send a messenger to Dobb's Ferry, for thereby he obtained a written reply to his anxious queries regarding the safety of the magazines and the situation of the Army, which he could palm off on DeLancey, when he would have got nothing but verbal answers had he seen Parsons in person.

Heron continuing, says:—

> One thing he said in the course of our conversation which convinces me that I am not deceived by him; that is, when he talked about his son he said, were he brought into New York, he wished that some provision may be made for him in the British Navy to serve in Europe during the present contest. This is a fact which will enable you to judge of him for yourself.

Heron in this makes a slip. He forgets that grave suspicion would fall on Parsons were his son to enter the British Navy, and his assertion that Parsons wished it might lead DeLancey to doubt his word. The editor of the "Record," having evidently little knowledge of Parsons' family, thinks the son referred to in this letter is Enoch, the future banker and financier, then a child between eleven and twelve years of age; but, instead, it is, William Walter, his eldest son, known as "Billy, the Midshipman," then in the American Navy, whose escape from the British at St. Eustatia, Parsons had just learned (June 15th), the letter announcing which furnishes an instructive commentary on the truth of Heron's statement. Billy had been captured and held a prisoner in the British fleet, where he had been treated with great inhumanity, having been loaded with irons for seventy-two days; and his intention was, now that he had escaped, "to get on board some armed vessel that he might have it in his power to retaliate for lost property and abusive treatment." Billy, who was now just nineteen, does not seem to have been blest with a very forgiving disposition, for his first move after escaping

from New York in 1780, was to obtain, through his father, control of boats and men to enable him to capture and punish the Tories on Long Island who had been instrumental in having him imprisoned. Heron knew all this, and a broad smile must have lurked behind his "unmeaning countenance," at the joke he was perpetrating on Headquarters in suggesting that Billy should have a place in the British Navy.

"I expected," continued Heron, "to have been able to furnish him e'er this time with the paper you showed me last, containing the several heads of those matters to which you wished to have clear and explicit answers. He readily agreed to pay the strictest attention to them. He will expect some money by me this time, but how to get it here, (in New York), I know not, as I would not wish to have any person besides yourself, or those you confide in, made acquainted with anything of that nature. The bearer will acquaint you where I am concealed, but it is not a proper place for me to see anybody; not that I have anything to fear from the family, but from the neighbors."

Failure to receive the paper and imperfect recollection of the contents, are the ingenious excuses by which Heron seeks to forestall the objection that the letter which he presents, as showing the manner in which intelligence is to be conveyed, does not appear to have been written with the slightest reference to DeLancey's Queries. Attention is again called to the necessity for money, but why Heron found it necessary to conceal himself, he has left an unexplained mystery.

Heron further says:—

I was at Knapp's seasonable enough to acquaint you of the movement of troops to Kingsbridge, and of the French troops changing or shifting their first intended route for that purpose; but Mr. Knapp had not returned home then.

Heron has always a ready-made excuse, but as the movement of July 2 was very suddenly and secretly ordered, and was begun and ended within thirty-six hours, and no orders were received by the operating columns until July 1, it is very unlikely that Heron could have learned of, or acquainted Clinton with it until after its occurrence. Heron also stated that the number of the French was between four and five thousand, that

the New York and New Jersey Lines had joined the Army and that West Point was garrisoned by militia, but he does not pretend that he got any of this information from Parsons. It is important to observe, in judging of Heron, that the "material articles of intelligence," promised by him, seem never to be forthcoming. Heron ends his letter with

Should any money be sent to our friend, it will be best to put it up in something like a belt. I am &c.,

W. H.

P. S.—I thought it advisable to cut the name off the enclosed.

The letter which Heron enclosed to the British Commander as Parsons' contribution, and on which especially the Editor of the "Record" founds his charge of treasonable correspondence, is as follows:—

CAMP PHILLIPSBURGH, *8th July, 1781.*

DR SIR.—We have now taken a camp within about twelve miles of Kingsbridge where I expect we shall continue until we know whether the States will in any considerable degree comply with the requisitions made of them, although we believe ourselves able to maintain our ground. You may easily conjecture what our future prospects are when I assure you the five regiments of our State are more than 1200 men deficient of their complement; and the other States (except Rhode Island and New York who are fuller) nearly in the same condition.

The right of the front line is commanded by me, consisting of Connecticut and Rhode Island troops; the left by General Lincoln, consisting of the brigades of Massachusetts. The second line, one brigade of Massachusetts and New Hamphire, commanded by General Howe. General McDougall commands at West Point. When the York forces join, he will be relieved, which I expect will be very soon, when I suppose he will take the right of the first line, and I shall be in the center; but this is yet uncertain.

Our magazines are few in number as well as very small; your fears for them are groundless. They are principally at West Point, Fishkill, Wapping's Creek and Newburgh, which puts them out of the enemy's power, except they attempt their destruction by a force sufficient to secure the Highlands (which at present they cannot do) our guards at the magazines being sufficient to secure them from small parties.

As the object of the campaign is the reduction of New York, we shall now effectually try the patriotism of our countrymen, who have always given us assurances of assistance when this should become the object; of this I have had my doubts for several years, and wished it put to the test.

The minister of France is in camp and the French troops yesterday encamped on our left near the Tuckahoe road. Their number I have not had opportunity to ascertain.

The other matters of information you wish I shall be able to give you in a few days. The messenger waits.

I am Dr. Sir
Yr. obdt. Servant

The signature, Heron says, he "thought it advisable to cut off."

This letter—the only letter Heron claims ever to have received from Parsons,—is obviously in reply to one from Heron in which he asks, among other questions, as to the location of our magazines, for the safety of which he artfully expresses fears, and as to the strength of the French, with the evident intent of drawing statements from Parsons which he can put off on De-Lancey as answers to his queries, for his own letter, which reports the number of the French, shows that he does not ask for the sake of information. His success, however, was not great, for Parsons tells him that the magazines are out of the enemy's reach and that he has not had opportunity to ascertain the number of the French troops.

This letter on its face is a private letter and such as any officer might have written to a friend in the Assembly, and there is no evidence that it is anything else than a private letter written for an innocent purpose, except Heron's statement that it was intended to convey intelligence to the enemy. If adaptation to an end is any evidence of design, then Heron's statement is untrue, for while Parsons might have written of the strength of the two armies, the state of their supplies, the disaffection of the Connecticut Line and of the important movement against New York ordered for the 14th, and many other things very useful for Clinton to know, and would have undoubtedly done so had his intention been to convey intelligence, the fact is that he did not, but wrote only of matters well known to both armies. That

the allies had attacked on the 3d, and were now encamped above Kingsbridge; that the Continentals were not recruited up to their full strength; that our magazines were few in number but out of the enemy's reach; that Parsons commanded the right of the line where the enemy's spies had reported seeing him with Washington on the 4th, and that New York was the object of the campaign, might have been news to the country member up in Redding to whom Parsons was writing, but to Clinton it was as valuable as would have been the information that the Dutch had taken Holland. If Parsons had been attempting to answer DeLancey's queries, we should expect to find them answered seriatim, of which the "Record" contains several examples, but he does not refer to or apparently have any knowledge of any questions except those asked by Heron in his letter. The peg manifestly does not fit the hole for which Heron says it was made, but it was the best he could get, and to extricate himself from his dilemma he offers it, such as it is, as the first of the series of "confidential friend" letters through which Parsons is to furnish "every material article of intelligence." The wonder is that Clinton should have been so dull and credulous as not to have detected the imposition.

If any doubt remains as to this being a private letter, fraudulently used by Heron, it should be removed by the following letter written by Parsons July 12, four days after the date of the "confidential friend" letter, when it is not unreasonable to suppose that his feelings and sentiments remained the same as on the 8th. This letter was written to Thomas Mumford, of Groton, Connecticut, a very intimate and confidential friend of Parsons, whose house was burned in September during Arnold's raid on New London. The original of this letter, which has never been published, I now have before me, together with the originals of ten other letters to Mumford, all in Parsons' own handwriting and abounding in patriotic sentiments. Mumford had been for years a member of the Assembly, was an earnest patriot, a man of large wealth and one of those who united with Parsons is raising the money to set on foot the expedition which surprised and captured Ticonderoga. In this letter, which is unquestionably private and confidential, Parsons doubtless expresses his real sentiments and feelings. It is very similar in

tone, sentiments and even expressions to the one written to Heron, and much nearer an answer to DeLancey's Queries. He commences his letter to Heron with, "We have now taken a camp within about twelve miles of Kingsbridge, where I expect we shall continue until we know whether the States will in any considerable degree comply with the requisitions made of them." He writes to Mumford, "The next day we possessed this camp where I expect we shall remain until we know what the States will do towards enabling us to pursue the intended operations of this campaign." He is unreserved and unconstrained in writing to his friend Mumford, and speaks freely of matters which would have been highly interesting to Clinton, but in what he says to Heron, who is not his intimate and whom he knows as a spy, he is cautious and guarded, writes briefly and as if merely replying to requests for legitimate information. We see by this letter, that instead of "no great cordiality subsisting between him and the gentry of that Nation," he appears to have been very friendly with the French and not at all horrified by the "unnatural alliance with the enemies to the Protestant religion, a perfidious nation with whom no faith can long be kept," which the "gentleman" in New York thought him "possessed of too much understanding and liberality of sentiment" to believe "consistent with the welfare of his country." A careful reading and comparison of these two letters, written so nearly at the same time and so very similar in character, will, I think, convince every fair-minded person that the letter to Heron was a private letter and nothing more, and written without a suspicion of the treacherous use to which it was to be put. The suggestion that Parsons wrote the letter by connivance with Heron to help out his deception, is so violently opposed to Parsons' high ideas of honor, that it is not worthy of a moment's consideration, to say nothing of the improbability of a man of his caution and experience committing an act so imprudent and so dangerous to his reputation. Nor is any credit to be given the suggestion that the letter was written as a decoy to confirm Clinton in his belief that the reduction of New York was the real object of the campaign, for it was not until the middle of August that the movement to the Peninsula was decided on. The following is the letter to Thomas Mumford:—

CAMP NEAR DOBB'S FERRY, *12th July, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—I owe to your friendship every intelligence I can give you, and to your patriotism and station in Government an account of your army in every situation and circumstance, however disagreeable this account may be at some times. On the 2nd inst. we marched from Peekskill with the American Army (consisting of about 3000 men) and at five o'clock in the morning of the 3rd gained the Heights near King's Bridge, where the Jagers and Refugees attacked our advance from walls, rocks and covers at a distance and without any order or regularity, by which we lost near twenty men killed and about fifty wounded, but the enemy had too much prudence to venture out in force, although we continued all day in the state of defiance, by which we thoroughly reconnoitered their works, and formed our opinion of their strength, which was a principal design of our march. At night we retired to Valentine's Hill, four miles from the Bridge, and the next day possessed this camp, where I expect we shall remain until we know what the States will do towards enabling us to pursue the intended operations of the campaign. We are erecting works at Dobb's Ferry to preserve the communication there which will employ us about a fortnight, by which time the States ought to be ready with their men to prevent our wasting the campaign in fruitless attempts against the enemy's capital post in America. Our news from General Greene and from Virginia is important and favorable, but we have no official accounts; Ninety Six and Augusta are said to have fallen with 500 prisoners in the latter, by which S. Carolina and Georgia are again in our possession except Charleston and Savannah. The Governors of those States have left Philadelphia to resume their Governments. Gen. Cornwallis is said to have lost 500 men by desertion and is retiring with his greatly diminished army towards Portsmouth. 'Tis also reported that the Marquis has fallen upon his rear and killed and taken near 200, but as we have no official accounts of any of these transactions, I only give you such reports as gain credit here.

Our allies are with us (perhaps about our number). Every civility and attention is paid to us. They are as fine a body of men as I ever beheld. The greatest harmony prevails between the allied armies and I think it will continue. Nothing so much wounds our feelings as to find ourselves unable to return the civilities we receive.

I must now ask your attention to the disagreeable and often repeated history of your own line of the army. The New England States, (except Connecticut), New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania have paid and clothed their officers and soldiers so as to give them content. In January, February, March, April and May we

were fed upon promises of a speedy payment of some part of our wages in solid coin, and different periods of payment have been affixed by the Council not less than three or four times, the last of which was the first of July; but not a farthing has been received to this day; our accounts are refused to be adjusted, and we having now taken the field cannot even extort an answer to our importunate applications; we are wretched indeed, rendered mean and contemptible by our distresses and the resentments of every rank of battalion officers raised to the highest pitch, and you can no more convince our officers and men that the State ever designed to pay them than you can create a world; our officers are daily resigning and, with every possible importunity, I can scarcely persuade the other officers to remain in the field until there is time to receive an answer to the General's letter and two of my own to the Council on the subject of their neglect. Without money I fear ten days will ruin our Line. 'Tis injustice to deny us our pay for eighteen months, and 'tis insult to drive us to the field where our own honor is concerned in remaining the campaign and then even refuse us soothing words.

What can more sensibly affect the honor of a man than to receive every mark of respect from the French troops serving with us and in return ask them to drink a cup of cold water? Yet this is literally our state. I know the State has so often heard of the danger of its Line disbanding, that a repetition makes very little impression, and our officers being compelled by indigence and extreme poverty to retire from the field is pleasing to the envious and malicious, the miser and the leveller, which compose too great a proportion of the State. I suppose by the conduct of my countrymen, they expect to obtain by their prayers, what less orthodox men are apt to believe is to be wrought out by our own exertions.

I wish in addition to the first they would do a little of the latter. I should feel much easier in my mind, as I don't believe that since the days of miracles Providence assists those people who will not help themselves. I find by the acts of Assembly that we are to have 785 men to fill up our Continental battalions, (we say we are more than 1300 deficient) 800 militia for three months and 1500 under General Waterbury till January; of the first we have received 12 since the Assembly rose, including three who were mustered out and sent on again, none of the second and about 300 under General Waterbury; that of the estimation of the Government we are now 2773 men deficient; the same proportion holds nearly in the other States, that of about 15,000 required and promised by the New England States only, we are deficient near 9000 men; but I won't scold

any more lest you think it personal. However, I have some reason to expect something of importance will be attempted by surprise within four days, perhaps it will not; if 'tis attempted and we succeed, it will nearly decide the fate of New York.

I am sure you are tired of reading and for this and other reasons I must bid you adieu at present.

I am Dr. Sr. yr. much obliged friend,

To Thomas Mumford.

The surprise referred to was the movement of July 21, which was planned for the 14th, but was postponed on account of the heavy and incessant rains.

I have so far treated the alleged "confidential friend" letter as genuine, but there is a very strong probability that, on the contrary, it is a forged or altered letter. Parsons in his correspondence often retained the original and forwarded a signed copy, for we find many of his originals among his papers. Washington and other officers were accustomed to do the same thing, so that a letter in the handwriting of a secretary over the author's signature was no more unusual or suspicious than is a signed typewritten letter to-day. It would have been very easy, therefore, for Heron without danger of detection to have forged a letter or copied and altered an original. The only difficulty would have been with the signature, for doubtless through permits and passes, Parsons' bold, round signature was well known at Headquarters and could not be counterfeited without great risk of detection. But Heron was in close quarters and something had to be done. In a postscript to his letter he tells us what he did. "I thought it advisable to cut the name off the enclosed." What probability is there, that Parsons' name was there to cut off? Parsons' letter not being in existence, we have no means of knowing whether it was an original or a copy; whether it was forged or altered, except as we can infer from circumstances. It it was an original, the desirability of committing Parsons to the fullest extent would

seem to be the strongest reason for not removing the signature, for what better evidence against him could there be than a letter in his own handwriting, signed by his own hand? If it was a copy, this reason would press with still greater force, as then the signature would be the only means of authentication. If the letter were forged or altered, the signature, if any, must necessarily have been forged, and though the forgery might pass undetected for the moment, the constant fear of discovery would naturally make Heron think it "advisable to cut the name off," or pretend to do so. The fair inference from his act would seem to be that this letter, in the shape it appears in the "Record," was not written by Parsons but was gotten up by Heron. An original letter might have been used as a basis, for the sentences, "We have now taken a camp within about twelve miles of Kingsbridge where I expect we shall continue until we know whether the States will in any considerable degree comply with the requisitions made of them," and, "As the object of the campaign is the reduction of New York, we shall now effectually try the patriotism of our countrymen, who have always given us assurances of assistance when this should become the object; of this I have had my doubts for several years, and wished it put to the test," for they express the well-known sentiments of Parsons whose patience had been severely tried by the apathy of the States; but the last clause, "The other matters of information you wish I shall be able to give you in a few days. The messenger awaits," reads like an excuse which Heron had added to account for the paucity of the information. If this inference is correct, or is, as I believe it to be, so probably correct as to destroy the value of the letter as evidence, the annotator's charge is disposed of. But some may contend that the letter was an original and the signature cut off to save Parsons. Even so, but this would be an admission that the letter was a private one, used without Parsons' knowledge, for it is not to be supposed for a moment that if Parsons had so far compromised himself as to write to the enemy under the guise of a letter to Heron, that either Heron, or even Clinton himself, would be so stupid as to destroy the one piece of evidence which would have placed him so completely in their power.

March 4, 1782, Conway moved in the British Parliament

"that the House would consider as enemies to his Majesty and the country all those who should advise, or by any means attempt, the further prosecution of war on the Continent of America." This was carried without a division. The next day the Attorney General introduced a plan for a truce, and orders soon went out for a cessation of hostilities. Of all this Clinton of course was duly informed. Parson had been in very feeble health throughout the Spring and on the 6th of April, 1782, he writes that he has left the service, which practically, on account of his health, he had done some months before. And yet Heron, in the postscript of a letter to Sir Henry Clinton, dated March 4, 1782, the day Conway's resolution was passed, writes such bosh as the following, which ought to be sufficient to convince anyone that Heron was merely attempting to hoodwink Clinton for the purpose of obtaining money.

I have kept General Parsons in a tolerable frame of mind since I had the pleasure of seeing you last, and although he was somewhat chagrined when I returned from this place last October, yet I am convinced that in endeavoring to serve you he has since rendered himself in some measure unpopular. As you very well remember, I acquainted you with this man's prevailing disposition and temper, and observed that although I believed him a rank Republican in principle, yet he was capable of serving you from other motives. The same motives are still existing, and in addition to them, disgust, chagrin and disaffection towards his superiors come in as powerful auxiliaries—his frustrating the expedition concerted by Tallmadge against Lloyd's Neck, his being an advocate for loyal subjects, and his being ready to communicate whatever comes to his knowledge of the secrets of the Cabinet, are facts which are indisputable. Whether such services merit any reward, or whether a man of principles can be useful to you, is not for me to say. However, he has been encouraged to expect something, and I suppose can't be kept much longer in countenance. For my own part I consider myself bound to persevere in discharging, as far as my situation will admit of, those duties which I owe my sovereign and my country.

It is amusing to read of Heron's efforts to keep Parsons "in a tolerable frame of mind"—Parsons who is so willing to serve the enemy, so ready to furnish "every material article of intelligence," and so in earnest as to communicate information over his

own signature;—to listen to his intimation to Clinton that more money must be forthcoming, for Parsons is a man of such high principles, such a rank Republican, so devoted to the interests of his country, that he cannot be induced to serve except for money, and to observe with what deference he leaves it to Clinton to say "whether a man of principles can be useful to him." The three indisputable facts which Heron mentions, Parsons "frustrating the expedition concerted by Tallmadge against Lloyd's Neck, his being an advocate for loyal subjects and his being ready to communicate whatever comes to his knowledge of the secrets of the Cabinet," are three indisputable falsehoods. As we have already seen by Parsons' letter of November 8, to Trumbull, and by his correspondence with General Heath, it was Parsons, not Tallmadge, who planned and urged upon Heath an expedition to break up the Tory nest at Lloyd's Neck; who made all the preparations and secured from New London the fleet which was to co-operate; and it was someone at Headquarters, and not Parsons, who frustrated the expedition. Heron undoubtedly knew all this, but how could he have reconciled Parsons' persistent activity and determined hostility with his previous representations to Clinton respecting him, had he told him the truth. Having been appointed to command the Coast Guard, Parsons undoubtedly endeavored, as he did in 1779, to break up illicit trading and prevent the plundering expeditions of the Shore people against the inhabitants of Long Island, all of which naturally made him unpopular with the marauders and brought upon him from this class accusations of protecting "loyal subjects." If Parsons were in fact so ready to communicate the secrets of the Cabinet, and if Heron were such a friend of the British as he pretended to be, how did it happen that Clinton was left in the dark for ten days as to Washington's plans when he began his march to Yorktown; and how was it that Parsons neglected to inform him of the projected raid upon the Tories at Lloyd's Neck. The fact that Heron's bureau of information always failed to work at critical periods is pretty good evidence that it had no existence.

But the important part of this postscript is the following:—"Whether such services merit any reward, or whether a man of principles can be useful to you, is not for me to say; however,

he has been encouraged to expect something, and, I suppose, can't be kept much longer in countenance." This is virtually saying, that, although Parsons "has been encouraged to expect something," he has not as yet received anything; and that unless something is forthcoming, his goodwill and favor "can't be kept much longer." Had Heron been able to satisfy Major DeLancey that Parsons had yielded to temptation and was actually furnishing intelligence, the money would certainly have been forthcoming, for Clinton had long before been authorized and urged by Lord George Germain to spare no expense in gaining over American officers of influence and reputation; and the fact that money, though often asked for, was not forthcoming, must be taken as conclusive evidence that Heron had as yet given no satisfactory proof that he had done or would be able to do those things he had promised. There could have been no difficulty in furnishing the proof had Parsons been guilty, and satisfactory proof was absolutely essential to the success of Heron's scheme to obtain money. Why then does he not furnish it? The only answer can be that Parsons is innocent, and Heron's negotiation to bring him over, a pretence and a fraud.

This is the whole case against Parsons. It rests entirely upon the unsupported statements of Heron contained in the foregoing letters. Many of these statements we have seen to be improbable; some have been shown to be false and all are discredited by Heron's admission in the postscript to his letter of March 4, 1782. Heron wrote under no fear of detection except from the British. Within this limit, he was entirely free to mix up truth and falsehood in any proportions which would best suit his purposes, for he never dreamed that his letters, once buried in the archives of the British Secret Service, would ever rise up to torment him. These letters make a great show of zeal in the British cause, but the valuable information which Heron brought to Parsons, contrasted with the worthless rubbish with which he amused Headquarters, should be sufficient to convince everyone that his interest was not real. A desire to plunder the enemy and obtain early intelligence of their plans and purposes, seems to have inspired his letters and his actions. Deception, as we have seen, was a weapon he did not hesitate to use. To accept statements, made under such circumstances and with such

objects in view, as evidence prejudicial to an officer of unblemished reputation and with a high sense of honor, who had risked life and property in the service of his country, evinces either an astonishing degree of credulity, or a burning anxiety to discover something with which to blacken the reputation of any so presumptuous as to dispute the authority of his Majesty, King George.

The Hon. Joseph Gurley Woodward, in an able and exhaustive paper read, May 5, 1896, before the Connecticut Historical Society, after reviewing the whole evidence and showing the utter absurdity and falsity of the charge against Parsons, thus characterizes Heron:—"William Heron was a professional spy; he swore falsely in the General Assembly, betrayed his employers on both sides, and, by his own statement, was engaged in a scheme, either to rob a British officer of his gold or his intimate friend of his honor. Parsons knew him as a Whig; Clinton knew him as a Tory; we know him as a liar. The unsupported testimony of such a witness against any man, where deflection from the truth would be of advantage, should not have a pin's weight."

Clinton's "Secret Service Record," unfortunately was annotated by one to whom might well be applied the remark made by Sparks in reference to the English historian, Adolphus, "that prejudice and embittered feelings are infirmities peculiarly unfortunate in a historian, whose aim should be, truth, candor and justice." With little knowledge of Parsons and no sympathy with the cause for which he fought, the unsupported statements of Heron are seized upon with an eagerness not begotten of a desire for truth or justice, and the rotten charge exhumed with almost "ghoulish glee" from the "Record," is flung out to the world for professional iconoclasts and sensational historians to feed upon. High character, eminent services, uniformly consistent and patriotic conduct, a reputation unsullied through a long and honorable career, the fact of his having the entire confidence of Washington with whom he was intimately associated, and of all the military and civil officers of his State, weigh nothing against inherited prejudices, and the declaration is boldly and unblushingly made that Heron's letters "conclusively show that while a Major General in the American Army, and

the senior General Officer of the Connecticut troops in that Army, he was in secret communication with the enemy and furnished them intelligence,"—and this, notwithstanding that every act and utterance of his from the beginning to the end of his life, gives the lie to the charge and throws the burden of proof upon his accuser, who, unless able to sustain himself by irrefutable evidence, must be regarded by the world as a libeller, and his act all the more mean and contemptible because directed against a man no longer able to speak for himself.

CHAPTER XXV

SHAY'S REBELLION. LETTERS TO JOHNSON. APPOINTED COMMISSIONER TO TREAT WITH THE SHAWANESE. JOURNEY TO THE MIAMI. VISITS THE FALLS OF THE OHIO. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INDIANS. TREATY CONCLUDED FEBRUARY FIRST. TERMS OF THE TREATY. LETTER TO PRESIDENT WILLARD, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS OBSERVATIONS AND DISCOVERIES IN THE OHIO COUNTRY.

July, 1782—October, 1786

AFTER leaving the Army, General Parsons fixed his residence at Middletown, Connecticut, to which place he had already removed his family, intending to resume there the practice of his profession. A more attractive spot for a home or a more promising place for business, he could not have selected in all the State, for the town at this time was in a thriving condition, second in population only to New Haven and Hartford, the population of New Haven by the census of 1782, being 7966; of Hartford, 5495 and of Middletown, 4612.

Unfortunately, Parsons after his retirement was very slow in regaining his health and strength, and for that reason was unable for a long time to resume actively his professional labors. Impoverished by the war and feeling the necessity of an immediate income for the support of his family, he wrote as follows to his friend, William Samuel Johnson, then Member of Congress from Connecticut, and afterwards United States Senator and President of Columbia College, asking his assistance in procuring the office of Collector of Imposts for Connecticut:—

MIDDLETOWN, *July 2, 1782.*

DEAR SIR.—I apply to you at this time on a subject interesting and important to me, because I have from former experience found you willing to do me any friendly office in your power. It is to beg your assistance to procure for me the office of Collector of the Impost for this State; Mr. Morris informs me the office is in the gift of

Congress, and that he is willing to aid me as far as it is proper for him, but the nomination for this office will be by the delegates of the State. Judge Huntington has written to Secretary Thomson on the subject, and Governor Trumbull assures me of his friendship. I need not repeat to you the many inconveniencies of my present situation, nor need I tell you, to whom 'tis fully known, that these inconveniences are the result of seven years service in the Army. You must be very sensible that my feelings will be wounded by returning to the profession of the law, and, indeed, the labor and fatigue of that business will be too great for my enfeebled constitution to endure. On many accounts my claim to the appointment is preferable to most other persons, and in none to be postponed to any other candidate. I think where I relinquish all claim to present support or future compensation, I may fairly ask for any office in the gift of the public to the discharge of which my abilities are competent. As to the place of residence, I shall make no difficulty. New London will be as agreeable to me as any other, and whatever securities are necessary for a faithful execution of the trust I am ready to procure. The salary of the office I don't know; but should it be less than a support for my family, it would at least ease me of much labor by enabling me to confine my business to a less compass. I wish to hear from you on the subject, and if you think it necessary, I will come to Philadelphia. I have reason to expect the friendship of the gentlemen joined with you from this State and have no doubt of your kind assistance.

I am with sentiments of great respect, Dear Sir,

Yr. Obedient Servt.,

To William Samuel Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Parsons does not appear to have been successful in his application, but the people of Middletown showed their appreciation of his services by electing him frequently to the General Assembly during the next few years.

The following letter General Parsons addressed to the Judges of the Superior Court of Connecticut, requesting them to communicate it to the Governor and Council in such manner as they deemed proper:—

HARTFORD, *November 22, 1782.*

GENTLEMEN.—Mr. Walters, a classmate and intimate friend of mine, who is a gentleman (except in his political creed) of a very amiable character, has lately been made prisoner to the United States,

and having been out to answer his parole, I had an interview with him, and strongly importuned him to find if no way could be devised to relieve our subjects now in imprisonment in New York, and he engaged to apply to the Admiral on the subject and inform me on his arrival in New York, and accordingly, I have received the following letter from him which I think it my duty to communicate to the Governor and Council, and request your Honors to communicate the same in such manner as shall appear proper.

(Copy.)

NEW YORK, *November 18th, 1782.*

DEAR SIR.—Having an earlier opportunity of writing than I expected, I avail myself of it to acquaint you of my safe arrival at my home and finding my family very well.

I have not had time to make full inquiry into the subject of your prisoners, about which we were conversing when I had the pleasure to see you, but from the general knowledge which I have and the little I have learned already, I am of opinion that if a proper person duly authorized from the State should make application to the Admiral for the release of the prisoners of the State on a full discharge of those that may be now with you and an absolute engagement to send in such as may from time to time fall into your hands, that he would certainly succeed, for I know that the State of Connecticut stands very fair with his Excellency on the score of exchange, and that he truly sympathises with the persons confined on account of their being very illy provided for withstanding the inclemencies of the approaching season.

Wishing you all happiness, I am, Dear Sir,

Yr. most Obedt. Serv't.,

W. WALTER.

P. S.—Should such person be thought proper to send, I need not say that I wish you may be the one.

I am with great esteem yr. Honors Obed't Ser'vt,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

The "Society of the Cincinnati" was instituted May 13, 1783, by the officers of the Revolutionary Army under the command of General Washington, at the Headquarters of Baron Steuben, in the Highlands of the Hudson. General Parsons became a member of the Society, as did most of the officers of the Army. Washington was elected the first President; Parsons for some time was President of the Connecticut Branch.

The basic principles of the Society are:—

An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which they have fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.

An unalterable determination to promote and cherish between the respective States, that union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American Empire.

Knowing how absolutely harmless this Society has proved to be, it is amusing to read to-day of the general disapproval it met with throughout the country. "It was to be hereditary in the family of the members; it had a badge or order, offensive in Republican eyes as imitating the European orders of Knighthood; it admitted foreign officers who had served in America and their descendants; it provided for an indefinite accumulation of funds which were to be disposed of at the discretion of the members; it was anti-republican, and a most dangerous political engine."

On the 4th of January, 1785, occurred an interesting event in General Parsons' family, the marriage of his eldest daughter Lucia, not yet twenty-one, to Stephen Titus Hosmer, one year her senior, a brilliant young lawyer of Middletown, destined to become the Chief Justice of the State. He was a graduate of Yale, as were his father and grandfather before him, and a student of law in the office of Oliver Ellsworth, Chief Justice of the United States, after whom he named his youngest child. In 1823, Hosmer was honored by his Alma Mater with the degree of Doctor of Laws.

General Parsons, who was now in the Connecticut Legislature, wrote from Middletown, May 21, to his friend William Samuel Johnson, as follows:

Dear Sir.—The vote of the General Election you have doubtless known before this time. The gentlemen of the Superior Court, who were all of the Council, have resigned their seats at the Council Board, their friends having made an ineffectual effort to repeal the law which made them capable of holding both offices. In consequence, General Erastus Wolcott, Mr. Treadwell and Mr. Sturges have been appointed of the Council and have taken their seats. McLane is chosen Chief Judge and General Wadsworth the assistant

Judge of the Superior Court in the lower house; but this matter is not yet settled.

The troops in this State are ordered to be raised and the officers in command are appointed. One thing appears to me very necessary for raising the full quota, for the small monthly pay will hardly induce men to enlist, but should Congress assign the lands promised to the soldiers in that region, I believe we should readily raise our quota of very good men, who will go out with views of permanent residence in that country. This appears to me of so much consequence that I hope Congress will not omit to ascertain the place and manner of our taking up our land.

Mr. Sturges informs me you were kind enough to request me to nominate to you our surveyor of that country for this State. I am so far unacquainted with your system as to be unable to judge of the duty of this officer, or the pay or other profits of the appointment; whether he is to be an actual resident in that country, and survey the lands granted to individuals or States, or only register the surveys made under his orders and generally superintend that business. Of either I believe myself capable, and having, as you well know, long entertained ideas of establishing myself, or at least finding an estate in that country, I beg you to consider whether this, or some other appointment there, would answer my wishes. If so, I shall hope for your friendship in procuring me such appointment. I care little for the name; it is only the substantial benefit I look at. If it is only the mechanical part of the business this officer is to attend to and his profits arise only from the actual surveys made by him, perhaps it will not be worth my attention. However, of this you are the more competent to judge. If so, give me leave to inform you that Mr. Obadiah Gore, an officer of our Line and a late inhabitant of Wyoming, is an ingenious surveyor and accurate in his drafts and much used to traversing the country in its wild state, who will, I believe, gladly accept the appointment and do great justice in the execution of it.

Nothing yet is done respecting the recommendation of Congress to provide for the foreign debt. The committee to which that and other revenue matters are referred, (of which I am one) has unanimously agreed to make any provision, in any way, whereby the foreign and domestic national debt shall be secured, only provided—in any way by imposts or some other way by which the revenues shall be derived from the joint benefits of the States and paid into the common treasury, (subject to the order of Congress only) and Congress be granted the right of regulating the trade of the United

States. I have thought of granting the imposts on the agreement of nine States and in the meantime would be disposed to secure ourselves from the nefarious consequences of New York's refusing the imposts.

If any kind of provision can be made for me, I am sure you will be inclined to befriend me.

I am with great esteem, your obed't servt.,

To Wm. S. Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The three following letters are also from General Parsons to Mr. Johnson:—

MIDDLETOWN, *June 13, 1785.*

DEAR SIR.—I have received your favor in answer to my two letters. Your attention to me demands my grateful acknowledgement, but several reasons induce me to beg your friendship for my friend Pomeroy, for the appointment to which I stand nominated, vis: A Commissioner for settling accounts in Virginia. First, I believe him better qualified for that office than I am, and he is in need of some appointment as well as myself. Second, The pay of that office will not exceed seven hundred pounds per annum. I have been a Major General in the Army and in Virginia I must carry that rank with me or fall into disgrace, and I believe it will be more than twice the expense for me to live there than for another man who has never held the military rank I have held.

I know the office of a surveyor is a subordinate one, not honorary, nor can I yet find how far it may be lucrative. Simply the fees of office would not tempt a man to undergo the fatigue and risk, but, as it stands in connection with the future disposal of the land, I think it may be worth trying, especially as Land Companies may be disposed to make a compensation, and the Army Locations are also much dependent on a full knowledge of that country. The fatigue or risk will by no manner of means prevent my undertaking, if I find other prospects to my mind. Before I decide, I should choose to become acquainted with the geographer and know his character and views; however, as I shall be named to you by the Governor, I wish to be appointed and noticed, on which I will go to New York and fully inform myself. If the place of a Commissioner to treat with the Indians, or a superintendency of Indian Affairs with a kind of Consular authority, can be promised, I can as well answer my purposes as by a survey; the last is preferable; the first not inconsistent with the survey, but may be assistant in the execution.

I am, dear Sir, with the greatest respect

Your obedient servant,

To Wm. S. Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

MIDDLETOWN, *July 31, 1785.*

MY DEAR SIR.—My unlucky stars are forever placing me where I should not be. By a letter from our friend Baldwin, I find I ought to have been at New York four days ago, (and it does not appear likely the appointment of a Commissioner of Indian Affairs is suspended to this time,) and my journey cannot avail me should I undertake it. I must, therefore, trust to the exertions of my friends who, I am sure, will do what in propriety can be done to gratify my wishes. However, to remove the objection of my appointment in Virginia, I have herewith sent a letter of resignation of my former appointment to be used if this Commissioner is not appointed, and if it should become necessary for the purpose. If this should not be couched in proper terms, or other better adapted reasons can be assigned, I wish the favor of you and Mr. Baldwin to prepare another letter of resignation in my name and have it presented if necessary. I have written to Mr. Foster and several other gentlemen of Congress, which I have enclosed, open. Those of them which you think best should be delivered, and I beg you to take the trouble to seal and deliver. Those which will do me no good, I wish may be suppressed; this depending on circumstances existing at the time and on the particular feelings of them, I cannot judge of at this distance. I am sorry to be obliged to give you so much trouble. I fear I shall never be able to repay your friendship. I would not wish to relinquish my present appointment unless it is necessary to secure the other.

I am &c.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To Wm. S. Johnson.

P. S.—The ordinance of Congress that no man hold two offices (if there be such an one) cannot affect my case; I am surely eligible though I can't hold both. The case of Dr. Lee who is nominated to the Treasury and is now one of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, is a proof of it.

MIDDLETOWN, *August 9, 1785.*

DEAR SIR.—I received a letter of the 26th ult. from Mr. Baldwin informing me you were kind enough to put me in nomination for the place resigned by General Wolcott, and by a postcript that the election was assigned for the 28th. This leaving me no time to arrive at New York before the day of election, rendered it an unnecessary step for me to go to New York. I, therefore, wrote a number of letters to Dr. Johnson, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Foster, Mr. Howell, General McDougall and Mr. Chas. McEvers, enclosed, open, in a cover to Mr. Baldwin lest you should be absent, desiring him, if you were

in New York, to consult you on the subject, and, if the election was not made, to deliver such of those as you should judge proper. I also enclosed a Carte Blanche to write whatever you thought proper respecting my Virginia appointment, since which I have received one of the 28th, the day on which the election was to have taken place, but, as it had not taken place when he wrote, I concluded it was laid by for that day. I since find my letter to General McDougall has been delivered—the enclosed is his answer. I believe I may form some expectation of Mr. Lawrence's vote and perhaps of the State of New York through that medium. Mr. McEvers will have influence with Delaware and some southern members. Massachusetts may be prevailed upon if Col. Pickering can have my present appointment, which I am sure he will prefer. How far Dr. McHenry, with whom I have some acquaintance, will favor me, I cannot say; perhaps Virginia may not be unfriendly, but on this I do not build. I shall much prefer this to the other appointment. The uncertainty of the time, whether the appointment is not already made, prevents my going to New York. I am sure your friendship will be necessary to accomplish my wishes.

Pray inform me whether t'will be necessary to go down and when. If I should obtain this appointment, would not the tour and a return through Mississippi to Georgia be agreeable to your son?

I am &c.,

To Wm. S. Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The insurrection in Massachusetts, known as Shay's Rebellion, had at this time assumed alarming proportions. The insurgents declared the whole machinery of government to be a scheme of oppression and openly proclaimed their right to disregard all laws obnoxious to them. In Bristol, Worcester and Middlesex Counties, an armed mob had compelled the judges to adjourn their courts. An attempt was made to seize the Arsenal at Springfield, and it was the evident purpose of the malcontents to march on Boston and, if possible, to take possession of the Capitol. The license running riot across the border was rapidly spreading into Connecticut. Windham had voted the Court of Common Pleas a nuisance and directed its representatives in the Legislature to move for paper money to depreciate five per cent. annually for twenty years, a scheme worthy of some modern financiers. Fearful of the consequences unless the insurrection should be promptly put down, Parsons wrote as

follows regarding the matter to his friend, Mr. Johnson in Congress:—

MIDDLETOWN, *October 2, 1785.*

SIR.—You will doubtless wish to have a more particular knowledge of the insurgency in Massachusetts and the hopeful prospect of a crop of sedition in our Country. Two of the Judges of the Supreme Court are now here from Springfield, and from them I find that on Tuesday morning, General Shepard with a body of militia took possession of the street near the Court House in Springfield and drew up his men in order and planted a field piece or two near the Court House for the protection of the Court. In the afternoon of that day, the Court opened and adjourned to Wednesday. The insurgents formed themselves in martial order at about half a mile distant, and in the evening sent a committee to the Court demanding that no civil causes should be tried nor any indictment found against the rioters at Northampton or against them for their present assembling. This was refused by the Court. On Wednesday the Court opened and adjourned to Thursday and then adjourned without day and without doing any business. On Wednesday the insurgents sent out for reinforcements from Berkshire and Worcester Counties, which arrived on Thursday morning. General Shepard's force was fluctuating till Thursday, when, being purged of the dross, they amounted to eight hundred and fifty men, well armed and disposed to fight. Among these was one entire company of Continental officers under the command of Colonel Oliver. The insurgents were about twelve hundred, nine hundred of whom were armed with fire arms and three hundred with staves and clubs. When the Court adjourned without day, Shepard marched out of the town to secure the Continental stores. The insurgents marched in with drums and fifes playing and colors flying, and the Judges took themselves to places of more safety. The insurgents were prevented with difficulty by their leader from beginning an attack on Shepard, and he with as much difficulty restrained his men from commencing an attack on them. On the whole, the business of the Court has been entirely prevented by the insurgents in the Counties of Middlesex, Worcester, Hampshire and Berkshire, in the last of which they have opened the prison doors and set the prisoners free in the face of the militia, who refused to oppose them. The real grievances are the existence of public and private debts; if both are abolished, I believe the people will be quiet for a small season. In this State their doctrines gain ground and are publicly avowed by great numbers, though at present we can outnumber them. Wind-

ham, the first in the cause of liberty or licentiousness, has had a town meeting in which they have voted the Court of Common Pleas a nuisance and directed their deputies to move for paper money to depreciate five per cent annually for twenty years. In short, I believe if measures are not taken by the present General Court in Boston (then in special session) to put a final stop to those commotions in that State, we shall be as effectually destroyed within three months as that State at present is.

It is the urgent wish of your friends that both you and Mr. Sturges attend our Assembly, and that a delegation be sent from Congress to enforce their requisitions. I hope to see you this week. In the mean time,

I am &c.,

To William Samuel Johnson, M. C. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 25th of June, 1785, Congress had directed a treaty to be negotiated with the Shawanese and other Western Indians. On the 22d of September, General Parsons was appointed by Congress "one of the Commissioners for the extinguishment of the Indian claims to lands northwest of the Ohio." Associated with him were General George Rogers Clarke of Kentucky and General Richard Butler of Pennsylvania. Clarke was by birth a Virginian and noted as an Indian fighter. His capture of Kaskaskia and Vincennes in 1789 had won him the appellation of the Hannibal of the West. Butler had served with distinction during the War as Lieut. Colonel in Morgan's Rifle Corps. Butler left his home at Carlisle, September 9, and arrived at Fort Pitt on the 16th. With him was a young Member of Congress, Colonel James Monroe, Jefferson's successor in the Presidency, who desirous of seeing the country, accompanied Butler as far as Limestone in Kentucky, whence he returned by way of Lexington to his home in Virginia. Leaving Fort Pitt, the 26th, with several boat loads of goods and provisions to be used in the negotiations with the Indians, and a company of infantry under the command of Captain Finney, Butler reached the mouth of the Miami on the 22d of October, at which place he was joined the next day by General Clarke.

General Parsons left Middletown for the Ohio on the 4th of October, as appears from his letter of the 3d to Colonel Wadsworth:—

MIDDLETOWN, *October 3d, 1785.*

SIR.—I am obliged to set off to-morrow about noon for the Indian treaty on the Ohio. I should have wished to have seen you before I took my leave of this city, but time will not admit. I have to beg of you to furnish me with letters to your acquaintances in Philadelphia, Lancaster and Carlisle in Pennsylvania, and a letter of credit for one hundred dollars. I do not imagine I shall want more money than I have, but I am going to a country unknown to me, and cannot be covered by my friends against accidents.

I am in haste, Dear Sir, your obedient servant,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, Hartford.

P. S.—If you are coming to Middletown to-morrow, I will wait till eleven o'clock, or see you at New Haven to-morrow, if you are going that way.

Upon his arrival at Trenton, he wrote as follows to his son, William Walter, at Middletown:—

TRENTON, *October 14, 1785.*

DEAR WILLIAM.—It rained yesterday so as to stop me at Princeton from whence I came this morning, and to ease my horses shall take my baggage in the stage and expect to reach Philadelphia to-night and to proceed on Sunday for Pittsburgh. I have left a little money for your mother with Capt. Watson which she may draw for when she wants, but before she draws at the end of my first quarter she must be informed whether Capt. Watson has received my pay; this he will inform her of or she may send to enquire. Just as I was leaving New York, Mr. Morrison and Dr. Cogswell applied to me for the purchase of the Horseneck farm; I gave the lowest price, which was 630 pounds lawful money—and that the notes in my name, which Dr. Cogswell received of me for the Pauguronk (?) lands, should be taken in payment as far as they would go—the rest in money; they are going to see the farm, and if they like it, will apply to you on the subject. I am clearly of the opinion you had best take that price and pay. Tell Mr. Hosmer that if he draws off my account against Thomas Pratt and sends it to Mr. Townshend at Colchester, he will collect the money. I shall send back from Fort Pitt if I can, after which you may not expect to hear from me until my return from Pittsburgh or 'till I arrive at Richmond, which I intend to attempt through the wilderness.

I am yours affectionately,

To William Walter Parsons. S. H. PARSONS.

The farm at Horseneck referred to, was the 151 acres granted him by Connecticut in October, 1781, for four pounds ten shillings per acre, in exchange for obligations held by him against the State.

October 16, General Parsons, then in Philadelphia, wrote to Colonel Edward Carrington, a Member of Congress from Virginia, in regard to a third Commissioner to adjust the Virginia accounts:—

PHILADELPHIA, *October 16th, 1785.*

SIR.—I am unhappy to find so good a man as Colonel Pickering, of whose integrity and abilities we mutually entertained so good an opinion, is necessitated to decline the nomination we have made of him as a third Commissioner. As I am now on my way to the Indian Treaty, I shall have no other opportunity of writing you before I hope to meet you at Richmond in the month of December or January next. I therefore, take the liberty of naming to you General William Irvine of Carlisle in Pennsylvania, or Ralph Pomeroy, Esq., of Hartford in Connecticut, as a third Commissioner to adjust those accounts. General Irvine's character I imagine is equally known to both of us; so, Mr. Pomeroy's character. If either of those gentlemen will be agreeable to you, I consent to your requesting their acceptance and will join you myself as soon as possible. In the meantime I have desired Mr. Johnson, (son of Wm. S. Johnson), whom I have appointed my clerk, to go on to Richmond as soon as he can, and, until my arrival, he will do what he can to assist you, and to your patronage I would commend him.

I am &c.,

To Colonel Edward Carrington. SAML. H. PARSONS.
Richmond, Va.

P. S.—Col. Thomas Heartly of York Town in Pennsylvania, is a gentleman with whom I shall be satisfied if he is more agreeable to you; if either of those gentlemen are acceded to on my part, I wish you to write duplicates to them that they may be able to have one of your letters with the Secretary of Congress to warrant his draft on the Treasury.

On the same day (October 16), General Parsons left Philadelphia for Pittsburgh. His first stage was twenty-six miles which brought him into what was known as the "Great Valley," a fertile tract underlaid with limestone—the source of lime for all the surrounding country. The next day he reached Lancas-

ter, sixty-six miles from Philadelphia, where he found two of his compatriots, General Hand and Colonel Atlee, and with them "spent an agreeable evening." From this place he wrote to his friend, William Samuel Johnson, respecting the Virginia accounts:—

LANCASTER, *October 18th, 1785.*

SIR.—I arrived here last night without any accident of consequence, and am to-day pursuing my route to Pittsburgh, where I hope to arrive in eight days. I get no news of the Commissioners or of the disposition of the Indians. I think it a fortunate circumstance to have come first into this country before I go to Virginia, if I finally settle those claims. I am fully convinced the United States should not be in haste to adjust those accounts. The supplies furnished from the Magazines of the Continent in the back country, the boats and men furnished from our Posts to General Clarke on that expedition, and the stores sent from New Orleans by Willing which were seized by General Clarke and applied to the use of that expedition, the orders of the State of Virginia to seize the property of the non-juring inhabitants, the amount of the property so taken and the mode of payment for the supplies furnished by that State, are all enquiries of serious consequence in this matter. I shall make every inquiry on this subject. Much information I have received. When I see Clarke, I think I can draw out the whole history.

I am &c.,

To William Samuel Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 18th, Parsons rode to Middletown on the Susquehanna River six miles below the Falls, a distance of thirteen miles. On the morning of the 19th he arrived at Harris' Ferry, now Harrisburgh, then an infant city scarcely four months old, but, already boasting some forty houses and growing rapidly. About five miles west of the River, he found Major Reed of Hazen's regiment, who had beaten his sword into a plough-share and was raising on his fine plantation a thousand bushels of wheat a year. That night he reached Carlisle, where he found a "richer soil, a pleasanter situation and a politer circle than at any place since he left Philadelphia." He called upon Mrs. Butler, wife of his fellow Commissioner, "an exceedingly polite and agreeable woman." General William Irvine, who lives at Carlisle, "is doing me every friendly office to forward me on my way."

He learned here that "General Butler left Fort Pitt the first inst., and that the information from the Indian country does not indicate the most friendly disposition in the natives." "I shall have," he writes, "a lonely route down the River to join him, five hundred and fifty miles from Pittsburgh, but am determined to surmount every difficulty and danger to accomplish the object of my commission." The roads through this country he finds unusually good; that which he passed over in going from Elizabethtown to Carlisle is far better than that from Middletown to Hartford. On the 21st, he rode from Carlisle through the Cumberland Valley to Chambersburgh, "meeting," he says, "a greater crowd of travellers to the Ohio in one day, than you will find through Middletown in a week. I have passed to-day seven with their families and several pack horses, besides other travellers, all bound the same way. . . . I hope to reach Fort Littleton to-morrow and to be at Pittsburgh next Wednesday if rain or accident doth not prevent. I still intend to go to Virginia when I have finished the treaty, but design coming home in the Spring." After a tedious ride over the Alleghanies, Parsons reached Pittsburgh (Fort Pitt), on Thursday, the 27th. On the same day he wrote at length to William Samuel Johnson, in Congress, regarding Indian affairs:—

FORT PITT, *October 27th, 1785.*

DEAR SIR.—I arrived this morning and find General Butler has been gone a month. The troops left Fort McIntosh last Tuesday and I shall leave this place on the 29th, one day being necessary to make my preparations. I find this a more serious and arduous business than I apprehended, nor do I believe all the treaties we can make will be of any utility whilst the Posts on the Western Waters are in the hands of the British troops; nor are the Indians such insensible animals as some have considered them. The less removed a person is from a state of nature, the fewer and more simple are his ideas, yet some truths are as clearly discerned by them as by persons more refined and civilized. The Indians reason thus:—we, say they, grew out of this land; our fathers were planted here by the great Spirit, and he gave us this land; if you take it from us, we have no hunting ground and our wives and our children cannot be subsisted. You, say they, live by tilling the ground and have land enough; we live by hunting the deer and must have more room—therefore, you are unjust to take our lands from us. The great

King over the Water never owned our lands and could not give them away, and he tells us he never has given you our lands, only granted to you the right of protecting us. You told us last year you had conquered us and the lands were your own, and that you were going with your soldiers to take possession of Detroit; you did not tell us the truth. Why have you not got possession of Detroit, and, if it is peace, our lands are still our own. On the whole, I own there appears to me so much reason in their observations that I scarcely know a sufficient answer.

It is not my province to call in question the propriety of our proceedings, yet let me suggest a thought. Suppose the land to be our own, is it not more expedient to give content to the Indians by purchasing such tracts as they will sell, than to hold out an idea which fires their pride and alarms their fears and will probably deluge our frontiers with blood? Very many families have gone from these parts to Detroit in the year past. Two hundred families have crossed the Ohio at one ferry. The British give them lands, implements of husbandry and a year's provisions. The Indians have lately held a great Council to brighten their chain, as they say, but, as is here believed, to form a general combination for defending their country, and an Indian war seems to be apprehended here. The Indians at the treaty last year, allege they were forced to sign the deed to convey their lands, and I am convinced they do not intend we shall proceed in the survey until some further satisfaction is made them. This is a fine country from the Alleghany mountains, though hilly; the soil is rich, the timber flourishing and the earth free from stone and well watered. 'Tis pity peace cannot give Spring to the industry of the inhabitants.

I am convinced this is the only proper route to be taken to get a knowledge sufficient to settle the Virginia accounts with justice; and Congress ought by no means to be in haste to close that account. I have taken minutes of every information relative to that matter, and shall be better able to satisfy my own mind on the subject than by three months' inquiry in Virginia. I shall go down the River the day after to-morrow and hope to be at the Treaty in eight or ten days, but the waters are yet low and I have five hundred and fifty miles to the Miami.

I intend, if practicable, to return by the wilderness to Virginia; if not, I shall winter in Kentucky or proceed to New Orleans, as I see little prospect of returning this way in the winter.

I am &c.,

To Dr. William S. Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Arthur Lee in his journal says of Pittsburgh in 1784:—

Its inhabitants are almost entirely Scotch and Irish, who live in paltry log cabins. A great deal of small trade is carried on, mostly for barter, the goods being brought from Philadelphia and Baltimore at a cost of forty-five shillings per cwt. There are in the town four attorneys, two doctors and not a priest of any persuasion, nor church nor chapel, so that they are likely to be damned without benefit of clergy. The place, I believe, will never be very considerable. Batteaux pass daily with whole families, stock and furniture, for Kentucky.

On the 29th of October, General Parsons commenced "his lonely route" down the Ohio to the mouth of the Miami. The voyage, so far as appears from his correspondence, was uneventful except for an occasional collision with snags in the channel and an attack from the Indians at Double Island, a few miles above the Station at Limestone. In a letter to his children written from the Great Miami, November 21, he gives the following account of the affair:—

At four o'clock in the afternoon, as we were carelessly floating down the River awaiting the coming up of six boats in company which we had left about two miles astern, we received a fire from five skulking Indians who had concealed themselves in the willows by the side of the River within forty yards of us. I had not been more off my guard during the voyage. I was leaning on the awning standing on a thwart of the boat, and not a man but was in fair view, where with the greatest deliberation they had opportunity to take the best aim, but no man was hurt. We returned their fire with all the arms we had, but apparently with no better success. We pulled to the point of an island and landed, where we awaited the arrival of our rear boats, when we set off in order of battle and kept ourselves prepared for action that day and night without further accident. We had about forty armed men in the different boats.

In closing this letter, he adds:—

The Indians have not yet arrived. We had a letter a few days since from them on the way and hope the treaty will end the next month. I am very happy with my colleagues, Generals Clarke and Butler, who are here. I hope to see you in the month of March. At present I think we shall return by Orleans, but this is uncertain,

but I shall urge it, as I wish to be able to give every information to the Line of the Army which they want of this country, in which they ought to find their homes.

On Sunday, November the 13th, General Parsons arrived safely at the mouth of the Miami, where he was formally received by his fellow Commissioners and produced his commission from Congress appointing him one of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs. The preparations for the treaty he found well advanced, the four blockhouses of Fort Finney and several dwellings having been nearly completed, and a storehouse built and already sheltering the goods brought down from Fort Pitt.

While awaiting the arrival of the Indians, the Commissioners explored the surrounding country, visiting a canebrake down the river, searching for the remains of an Indian fort on the opposite shore and examining the place selected for a camp for the expected Indians. Major Finney's house being completed, he invited them to a house-warming and dance and a week later dined and wined them and their officers. At the request of his colleagues, Parsons drew up the regulations to be observed during the treaty. On the 28th, a complimentary visit was made by the Wyandots and Delawares, who had been the first to arrive at the Council. They were received in due form with a salute, and after the little etiquette of reception had been observed, such as serving them with pipes, tobacco and a dram all around, General Parsons arose and welcomed them in a brief address, as follows:—

We are glad to see you the first at the Council Fire of the United States. It is a proof of your good intentions and determination to hold fast that chain of friendship which binds the United States and you together. We are glad to find by the reports of our messengers, that you have given both advice and assistance to bring the other western tribes of Indians to the same way of thinking with yourselves. We hope it will be effectual, and that they will listen to the voice of proffered peace and consult their future interest. We advise you as brothers to continue your endeavors in the good work. We are pleased to see the Shawanese and expect they will return to their people convinced of the falsehoods which have been propagated amongst them by persons who are enemies to them and to the United States, and that they now see that the United States are ready

to grant them peace, and have opened their arms to receive them into their protection.

The address ended, the Commissioners retired, having first ordered additional refreshments, which the Indians took to their encampment to drink.

The Shawanese not having as yet responded to the call to the treaty, another effort was now made to induce them to come in. Word was sent out by runners that the Commissioners would wait fifteen days for their determination, and even longer if assured they were on the way, but in case of refusal, they must blame themselves alone for future consequences. While waiting for the decision of the Indians, the Commissioners employed the interim in visiting the Falls of the Ohio. They left the Miami December 5, and returned the 15th. It was on this trip that Parsons saw the curious petrifications he describes in a letter to President Willard of Harvard College, a reprint of which closes this chapter.

On the 3d, General Parsons wrote Mr. Johnson as to matters of public interest lately brought to his attention:—

FORT FINNEY AT THE MIAMI, *December 3d, 1785.*

DEAR SIR.—In my last to you I enclosed a crude, undigested plan for securing and making the best public advantage of this country, on which subject I will converse when I see you. At present I will only say, I am convinced the present plan of Congress is not only impracticable, but is in its operation so slow that it will defeat itself.

These some days we have been taken up with attention to some of the Shawanese, who are a haughty, proud race of beings who call themselves the "Heart of Mankind," but who, I think may be managed advantageously in their own way. These fellows do not own a foot of land in the world, but have the address with their few numbers, not exceeding three hundred, to become the key by which the door to the other nations is opened or shut. They have turned back the other nations who were on their way to the treaty. This morning they set off for their town to bring in their nation and to call back those who had returned. I am deceived greatly if they do not use every exertion to bring in their people. We refuse to hold any treaty with them unless their nation is all convened, and have agreed to wait fourteen days and no longer. They have gone back with very good impressions.

There are some things you ought to know respecting this country. Here Congress places its expectations for paying the National Debt, and I have not a doubt it is an ample fund for the purpose if that attention is paid to it which the importance of the object requires; but should this be omitted, I need not be a prophet to assure you the United States will never be one farthing benefitted by these lands. The population of the country on the east of the Ohio, their views and conduct, you have no conception of; and I wish those views may not be extended further than the present settlers. I find from Mississippi to Virginia, from North to South, agents are employed for defeating the benefit the United States expect from these lands.

I am now, (the 7th of December) at the Falls of the Ohio, where we have come to pass away the time to the 15th, when we have every reason to expect the Nations of Indians at the Miami, where they have been prevented attending by British emissaries and our own, who are the worse of the two. I had another reason for coming here, viz: to give the people of this country an opportunity of laying their sentiments, as well as distresses, before the Commissioners, and to examine as well as I am able, the foundation of their grievances and their complaints of the conduct of the Indians. On these subjects I am convinced, but do not wish to trust my opinion in a letter the route this might take. I have, also, informed myself of the business of my other Commission, and am still of opinion that no time is yet lost in postponing that settlement.

There at present seems a prospect of the Indians treating to our wishes, but 'tis uncertain. The western nations were on their way and were stopped by the Shawanese. These, in turn, have sent out to those and other nations to come in, and we have great reason to believe that nation will be in very generally next week. If nothing is heard from them in that time, we shall make our course home in the safest possible manner. I have taken the liberty to enclose my son's letter to your care for more reasons than one. I beg you to forward.

I am &c.,

To Wm. Samuel Johnson, M. C. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The following letter is from General Parsons to his children in Connecticut, and is one of a series of letters informing them from time to time of the incidents of his journey. Of this series, unfortunately, a few only have been preserved, and these mostly in such bad condition as to be unavailable:—

FORT FINNEY, MOUTH OF MIAMI, *January 7, 1786.*

MY CHILDREN.—I wrote you last from the Falls the 10th of December. I returned to this place the 15th, since which I have nothing of consequence to inform you, nor has there been any opportunity to convey any letter to the settlements. I find the spirit of emigrating to this country begins to reach Connecticut. A short time since, one Ebenezer Smith of Chatham with his family, with two other Connecticut families, arrived at the settlements of Kentucky. It may be well for you to inform David Smith of Middle Haddam of the welfare of his brother, and also of another brother who is settled on the Mississippi about one hundred miles above the mouth of the river Ohio. The people come on very inconsiderately, for although no man has painted the goodness and advantages of that country in too high a point of light, at least in my opinion, yet the titles to the landed estate in Kentucky are so very uncertain, that the chance is at least three to one that a man who purchases there must defend his title by a law suit, the expense of which will ruin a new settler, even if he should succeed. This arises from the excellence of the country. Real or supposed defects in making a good title has induced survey upon survey, in many instances as many as eight or nine, which may all be contested, a fruitful source of profits for lawyers, but poverty to the honest purchaser. After he has expended his all, he is left a beggar, perhaps with a right of recovering on his warranty, without means of pursuing it. The emigrations from my country have induced these remarks from me. I believe every man has some national attachments, else I can't assign a reason why I should feel a stronger inclination to prevent my own Countrymen involving themselves in trouble than the men of other States. I think I am under no great obligation to take this trouble from any special favors I have received in the State which gave me birth; the unmerited abuse I have so liberally received from my own people, fully balances every honor their own opinions or their own interests have conferred upon me. But silence in this case would be criminal resentment. I therefore, wish you to make no secret of my opinion on this subject. If those who have views this way treat the opinion with neglect or contempt, it is what I have often experienced without deserving it; and I shall have all the satisfaction I wish—a consciousness of having honestly warned my brethren to avoid an evil I have pointed out. If they want further evidence of the propriety of the assertion, no obligation lies on me to take any more trouble on the subject. The lands northwest of the Ohio are in every respect equal to those of Kentucky from which the River

divides them. If any of my friends cannot wait until Congress opens its sales, there are 150,000 acres of land granted to General Clarke and his officers and soldiers, to which the title is unquestionable and where they may purchase with safety. This tract begins on the River Ohio about eighteen miles above the Falls and extends twenty-four miles on the River and back from the River so as to make that quantity of land. Any person applying to General Clarke at the Falls, will be informed with truth and certainty as to whatever he wishes to know on the subject, and from whose honor and friendliness he will find himself saved from many evils he will fall into among the land jobbers of Kentucky. The grant to General Clarke and his officers and soldiers, goes under the name of the Illinois Grant, and is in many respects as valuable tract of land as any in these Waters, and has this great advantage above the lands of Kentucky, that the title is undisputed.

When I say the lands northwest of the Ohio are as good as those of Kentucky, I would be understood as saying that I believe there is as much good land as in Kentucky, but not lying in one tract. The best lands in that country are in a valley or glade beginning near Limestone, about eighteen miles below the Scioto and extending in a curvilinear direction to the Falls, about one hundred and fifty by fifty miles. The whole of this great tract is excellent land. As much land every way equal to that may be found on this title between Limestone and the Falls, extending as far into the country west from the River as Kentucky does east, but not as great a quantity in one body.

The Indians have not come in and I believe there is no prospect of a general attendance. We are perplexed about the mode of getting away from this Garrison. The distance to New Orleans is nearly sixteen hundred miles and the passage from thence uncertain. To go through the wilderness is three hundred miles and we have no horses. To return to Fort Pitt, five hundred and fifty miles against the stream and driving ice, is also attended with difficulties. I don't know what course we shall take, but believe the last the forepart of February, when the River will be less difficult and the season so far advanced as to render the road less dangerous from the enemy.

I wish you a happy New Year. If wisdom, prudence, morality, religion and industry should increase in you with your accumulated years, it would be happy indeed. Your mother's welfare is much in my thoughts. My affectionate remembrance of her you will communicate to her. Tell Lucia, Esther and all the children nothing

would more increase my happiness in this world than once more to see them. For me, 'tis of little consequence what my lot is in the few remaining days I have in this world.

Yours affectionately,
SAML. H. PARSONS.

January 7, 1786.

P. S.—At last we find the Indians are about to attend us. Nearly five hundred are here and near us and other nations are on their way. Perhaps we may have one thousand of different tribes. This I fear will keep us till March, which will make me as late home as about the 10th or 15th of April. If we conclude the treaty to our satisfaction, I think we shall go through the Indian towns to Fort Pitt, which will give me a further opportunity of seeing the country.

My love to your mother and the family. We send an express to Fort Pitt to-morrow and this goes to be forwarded.

The task before the Commissioners was to persuade the Shawanese to surrender peaceably the lands occupied by them in that part of the Northwest Territory, and accept the protection of the United States. By the treaty of Fort Stanwix (October 22d, 1784), the Iroquois, who claimed the country as conquerors, had relinquished all their rights to the lands northwest of the Ohio. By the treaty of Fort McIntosh (January 21, 1785), the Wyandot, Delaware, Chippewa and Ottawa nations had acknowledged the sovereignty of the United States, and ceded to it all the lands claimed by them except the land included within a boundary line beginning at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River and extending with the course of the River to the portage between that and the Tuscarawas; thence down that stream to the crossing place above Fort Lawrence; thence westwardly to the portage of the Great Miami; thence along the portage to the Maumee River and down that River to Lake Erie; and thence along the south shore of the Lake to the mouth of the Cuyahoga. This reservation may be roughly described as the tract between Cleveland and Toledo extended southerly about sixty miles. But the Shawanese proved far less pliable than the other tribes. They objected most strenuously to the advance of the white man beyond the Ohio, and were reluctant to enter into any treaty surrendering their lands and acknowledging the supremacy of the United States. Persuaded at last, largely through the friendly inter-

cession of the Wyandots and Delawares, the Chiefs conferred with the Commissioners and agreed upon the terms of a treaty to be submitted to the General Council, the articles of which, at the request of his colleagues, General Parsons drew up in due form.

On Monday, the 30th of January, 1786, a General Council was held in the Council-House at which were present the Chiefs and Warriors of the Shawanese, their women and children, with their friends, the Wyandots and Delawares, to consider the terms of the proposed treaty. The Commissioners, General Parsons, who drafted the treaty acting as their spokesman, made a brief address and read the several articles of the treaty. The address, a copy of which, in his own handwriting, is among the General's papers, is as follows:—

Chiefs and Warriors of the Shawanese:

We have attentively considered everything you said to us yesterday. We are happy to find you disposed to join with us in measures to stop the further effusion of human blood, and to hear your professions of sincerity in earnestly desiring a restoration of peace between the United States and your nation. We know the great God above sees what we are about and knows our thoughts, and will punish you or us if what we speak with our lips does not come from our hearts. It gives us great pleasure to hear you have at length opened your eyes to your true interest, and are determined not to listen to evil counsel in future.

You told us you had brought three prisoners with you whom you had taken from us, and would take them back to your towns that all the rest of our flesh and blood might be collected, and all brought in together. This is not in any degree satisfactory to us. We do not see a necessity of these three prisoners returning to your towns, but they must be delivered to us and effectual measures taken immediately to restore to us all others who have been taken away by your nation in the late war.

Having already stated to you fully your own situation in regard to the United States, it remains for us to inform you of the terms on which peace will be granted to you, and your nation received into the friendship and protection of the United States.

General Butler, in his journal of the events of the treaty, has so amplified and elaborated this address as to render it almost

unrecognizable, and all he says of it is, that the Commissioners made it. Aside from the address being among the Parsons papers, there can be no question as to Parsons having delivered it, for Clarke took no part in the discussion, and Butler never took part without plainly stating that he did so. The following are the articles of the treaty:—

1. Three hostages shall be immediately delivered to the Commissioners by the Shawanese, to remain in the possession of the United States until all the prisoners, white and black, citizens of the United States, who were taken by the Shawanese nation or any of them or any other Indians residing in their towns, shall be restored.

2. The Shawanese acknowledge the United States to be the sole and absolute sovereign of all the territory ceded to them by the King of Great Britain by the treaty of peace made between Great Britain and the United States, the Shawanese to be under their protection.

3. If any Indian or Indians of the Shawanese nation, or any other Indian residing in any of their towns shall commit murder, or robbery, or do any other injury to any of the citizens of the United States, the nation shall be obliged to deliver such offender or offenders up to the officer commanding the nearest Post of the United States, to be punished according to the ordinances of Congress; in like manner, any citizen of the United States who shall commit murder, or robbery, or do any other injury to any Indian or Indians of the Shawanese nation, or any other Indian living in any of their towns under their protection, shall be punished by the laws of the United States, or of the State to which such offending citizen belongs.

4. The Shawanese having knowledge that any nation or body of Indians designs to make war on the citizens of the United States, or of their counseling together for that purpose, shall immediately inform the Commanding Officer of the nearest Post of the United States, thereof; or in default thereof shall be considered as parties in such war and punished accordingly. The United States assumes the corresponding obligation.

5. Upon the Shawanese nation agreeing to these articles the United States do grant peace to that nation and receive them into their friendship and protection.

6. The United States do allow to the Shawanese nation lands within their territory to live and hunt upon, the east, west and south boundaries of which are as follows:—commencing at the southeast corner of the tract reserved to the Wyandots and Delawares by the

treaty of Fort McIntosh; running thence down the Great Miami to the forks of that River next below the old Fort which was taken by the French in 1752; thence due west to the River de le Panse; thence down that River to the Wabash and down the Wabash to the Ohio, beyond which lines none of the citizens of the United States shall settle or disturb the Shawanese in their settlement and possession. And the Shawanese do hereby relinquish to the United States all title or pretence of title they ever had to the lands east, west and south of said lines.

7. Any citizen settling on the lands so allowed to the Shawanese, is out of the protection of the United States.

The terms of the treaty were discussed with much warmth and spirit on both sides, the Indians asking modifications, particularly of the boundaries, which the Commissioners would not agree to. No conclusions having been reached, the Council was continued the next day and the treaty further explained, but it was not until the Commissioners in plain terms presented the alternative of cession or war, that the Shawanese chose the former, as had the other tribes. It being late, and the Chiefs observing that it was not customary with them to do business in the latter part of the day, the treaty, although agreed to on the 31st, was not signed until February 1. Eight Chiefs signed in behalf of the Shawanese, the only nation participating in the treaty, and the Commissioners in behalf of the United States. The number of Indians present at the treaty, including men, women and children, by actual count on the 2d, was four hundred and forty-eight, of whom three hundred and eighteen were Shawanese. The territory ceded by this treaty includes the city of Cincinnati and a large part of the State of Indiana. By way of celebrating the treaty, the Indians, all the following day, continued drinking, but on the 3d and 4th were so far recovered as to be able to receive their presents and prepare for returning to their towns. Parsons was right when, on his way to the treaty, he wrote Mr. Johnson from Fort Pitt, "I do not believe all the treaties we can make will be of any utility whilst the Posts on the Western Waters are in the hands of the British troops," for it was not long before the Shawanese repudiated the terms of the treaty they had agreed to in apparent good faith.

Captain Jonathan Heart, who writes the following letter to

Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth of Hartford, was a graduate of Yale in 1768, served through the war in the Connecticut Division and for a time was Brigade Major of the First Connecticut Brigade. In April, 1785, he came to Ohio as Captain in Colonel Harmar's First Infantry, a regiment of regulars raised especially for service in the West, and at this time was stationed at Fort Harmar at the mouth of the Muskingum. In 1791, he was made Major in the Second Infantry, a new regiment just raised, and was with St. Clair in November of that year, when he suffered his disastrous defeat on the banks of the Wabash, and was killed while leading a charge against the Indians:—

FORT HARMAR, *January 22d, 1785.*

SIR.—In any other situation I would not have taken this freedom with your name, but at this distance from my connections, a letter directed to a common citizen would scarcely find the Country, much less the person, to whom directed. I have, therefore, presumed to request a communication through a more conspicuous character, and, as it respects a most valuable friend to the happiness of America, I may with propriety use the freedom.

Major General Parsons has been pleased to honor me with a letter of the 9th instant, received this day by a Delaware Chief. General Parsons requests me, as opportunity may present, to give information to his friends. He passed this Post the 7th, and arrived at the Miami the 13th of November. On the passage, he was fired upon by a party of Cherokees, but without injury. Cherokee is a name like Refugee, and includes the banditti of all Tribes and friends of none. Equally enemies to Americans, Britons and Indians, they are determined to make no peace, but happily their numbers are inconsiderable. The treaty was not entered upon the 9th instant, as every exertion had been, and was still making by British Emissaries and others opposed to a peace to prevent the Indians from coming to the treaty; he says, however, a number of tribes have already arrived, many others near, and every favorable appearance that the western tribes will generally come in, and he can see no reason why a peace may not be made with them agreeable to our wishes.

He has been as low as the Falls of the Ohio and is delighted with the country; indeed, the richness of soil, agreeableness of situation and extent of valuable territory ceded to the United States by the late treaty, is scarcely conceivable; and to obtain a peaceable possession of this soil for the purpose of sinking our national debt and opening a field for European as well as American emigrants, are

objects generally considered of importance. No country was ever yet discovered better calculated for industrious farmers than the lands on the Ohio—rich soil, good timber, temperate summers and mild winters—and as to the future advantages of trade, the water communications, as delineated on the maps, sufficiently point out.

I cannot do justice to the country by description. General Parsons is so much delighted with it, he earnestly recommends it to our eastern inhabitants to turn the course of their emigration from the mountains of Vermont to this most delightful country. He will probably return about the last of April; and here I cannot help observing, that in the situation the Indians were left at the close of the war under British influences, their emissaries at all times with them, a better man than General Parsons could not have been sent out to unravel their intrigues, counteract their disguised policies, and by a fair, open and honest treatment, lead the uncivilized nations to a friendly treaty; and if we have peace, he has made it. Please, Sir, acquaint his more intimate connections of his situation.

I have the honor to be &c.,

To Colonel Wadsworth, Hartford. JONATHAN HEART.

The two following letters relate to the settlement of the Virginia accounts and the selection of an additional Commissioner:—

NEW YORK, *June 12th, 1786.*

SIR.—Upon receipt of your letter, I applied to Colonel Pickering, requesting him to accept the trust you proposed to him, but he again declines. I then wrote to General Lincoln on the same subject and have the pleasure to inform you that he agrees to undertake with us the settlement of those accounts as soon as he shall return from the eastern part of Massachusetts, which he informs will be early in July. I am of the opinion it will be necessary to agree upon certain principles conformable to which the accounts should be made out; these being settled, the accounts and arranging the evidence to support the charges is merely a mechanical part of the business, as well executed by our clerks under the inspection of one of the Comissioners, as by ourselves. I therefore propose that you meet General Lincoln and myself in this city the last week in July, when every question necessary to be decided previous to shaping the accounts may be determined, and the accounts being prepared agreeable to such determination, will be very readily closed in a short time. I am inclined to make this proposition, as the season of the year is such as will induce you to come to the northward, and we should with

reluctance consent to go to Virginia until the season should be further advanced; and should we be so fortunate as to agree on the mode of arranging the accounts and the principles on which they are to be adjusted, much time will be saved in the settlement.

I wish, Sir, your answer as soon as possible, directed to me at Middletown in Connecticut, that I may be able to inform General Lincoln of your intention on this subject.

I am &c.,

To Colonel Heth. SAML. H. PARSONS.

BOSTON, *August 16, 1786.*

SIR.—Your letter of August 4th, directed to my father, General Lincoln, came to hand a few days after he sailed from this place to the Penobscot on a commission from this Government, among other things, to treat with a tribe of Indians there. Supposing that a reply to his letter of May 13th would arrive in his absence, he requested me to open it, and to write to you that as you had not said anything further relative to the subject of your letter and his reply in May last, he supposed the Commission was at an end and accordingly felt himself at liberty to accept the appointment which I have mentioned. He expects to return in about two months and will then, if requested, attend the trust you have been pleased to repose in him.

From the knowledge I have of my father's engagements, I am confident that the month of November will be convenient for his attendance. And as to the pecuniary part, I know that he has no money to spare for expenses in public business, and that he has labored too long already without pay, other than the important engagements of the public, further to be deluded by them. Your sentiments on these points will, I venture to say, be perfectly in unison.

I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect

Your most humble servant,

To Saml. H. Parsons. BENJ. LINCOLN, JR.

The following is from General Parsons to Mr. Johnson:—

MIDDLETOWN, *October 8, 1786.*

DEAR SIR.—Superstition, which you will say has the least place in my character, with my present indisposition, keeps me here.

I proceeded as far as Fairfield last Friday on my way to New York; between Stratford and Fairfield, the horses were taken sick, the stage broke down, the driver was ill natured and I broke my walking stick, and on Saturday returned home where I am at present

confined by a violent cold; however, I hope to be able to make another attempt to-morrow or Wednesday. I hear General St. Clair is my rival about the Western Country; if so, I am willing to accept the office of Chief Justice if I can obtain it, provided he succeeds in the other. I will do this only on that condition, as I know of no other man with whom I should be willing to go in a subordinate character who is likely to be appointed. That Country is my object; I hope to be with you this week. Mr. Mitchell thinks it not necessary to send a committee from Congress to your Assembly, as nothing will be done under the present factious state of our Government; but all your friends join in ardent wishes that you and Mr. Sturges will be in the Assembly next week.

I am, Dear Sir, &c.,

To William Samuel Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

P. S.—The Massachusetts mob have prevented the Supreme Court in Berkshire.

The Commissioners, immediately after the conclusion of the treaty at Fort Finney, commenced preparations for their homeward journey. As the route by Fort Pitt was the only practicable one at that season of the year, they returned that way, Generals Parsons and Butler reaching Fort McIntosh, March 12, 1786. General Parsons, during his absence upon the business of the treaty, noted everything new or strange which came under his observation. The accounts of his discoveries which got abroad, attracted much attention, but were so incorrectly reported, that, in the following October, in a letter to President Willard of Harvard College, he gave a particular description of them for the information of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. This letter appears in full in the Memoirs of the Academy for 1793. (Vol. XI. Part 1, p, 119.) The plan of an ancient fortress mentioned in this letter, General Parsons had sent to President Stiles of Yale College, who, upon receiving it, had enclosed it to Benjamin Franklin and written him asking his opinion as to the Indian Mounds described in Parsons' communication. The letter as published in the Memoirs, is as follows:—

MIDDLETOWN IN CONNECTICUT, *October 2d, 1786.*

SIR.—The frequent publications I have lately seen of accounts said to have been given by me of my discoveries in the Western

country, many of them misrepresentations and some of them totally without foundation, induces me to execute a purpose I had long since entertained of communicating to the Society for promoting Arts and Sciences in your State such observations as occurred to me in my journey into that country and the discoveries there made.

It appears to me of consequence that information of facts which may tend to throw light upon any inquiries in the natural world, should be given to some literary Society where all facts and observaitons being carefully compared, our reasoning on the subject may be with more certainty, and old principles confirmed or new hypotheses established with more accuracy.

I left the settled parts of Pennsylvania the latter part of October last, and, not to mention the large limestone springs frequently to be found in the County of Cumberland sufficient to turn mills within a few rods of their issuing from the ground and other curiosities I never saw before, about the 25th of that month I passed the Alleghany Mountains in the old Pennsylvania road. The ascent of about three miles is gradual and easy. On the summit is a large extent of land comparatively plain. It is about eight miles from the top of the mountain on the east to the beginning of the descent on the west; whence to the level on that side is about eight miles and a half. This extent contains almost all soils and descriptions of land; from the sandy pitch pine barrens and stony heath, where there is no apparent moisture, to as fine plough-land and luxuriant pasture and mowing as I had before seen. On the mount are several mill streams and springs of excellent water. It is observable that the ascent of all those hills and mountains from the east, is greater than the descent on the west; and from the extensive grand view on the top of the mount, from which the country on the west and on the east is seen to a great distance, it is clearly discovered that the level of the country on the west is vastly higher than the level on the east of the mountains. I had no instruments to determine the difference of these levels, but the fact is easily discerned by the eye. In travelling to this place, I observed the stones were pitched in the earth inclining to the horizon in angles of thirty to forty degrees (very few if any lay horizontally) and in a general direction from the northeast to the southwest, which is a circumstance I do not remember to have found on the west of that ridge of mountains.

I arrived at Pittsburgh the 30th, three hundred and twenty miles from Philadelphia. This is a place conveniently situated for carrying on the interior commerce of that country. It stands on a point at the conjunction of the Alleghany river (which extends about two

hundred miles northeast from that place) and the Monongahela, which in its meanders waters a country southeastward about three hundred miles. From this point begins the Ohio, which after running in its serpentine course more than eleven hundred and eighty miles and receiving in its progress many large rivers from the east and from the west, falls into the Mississippi in about latitude thirty-six degrees and forty minutes. At Bedford on my road to this place, I was informed by Col. Wood of many curious discoveries lately made in the West country, among others, that in digging a cellar at a place called Wheeling, ninety-seven miles down the Ohio, at several feet depth in the earth, was discovered a stone wall laid in lime. I arrived at Wheeling the 8d November and made strict inquiry into this account, and was informed by Mr. Zanes, an intelligent, sensible man and and one of the legislature of Virginia, that in digging for a cellar not far from that place, had been discovered a wall some feet under the earth very regularly laid up, apparently the work of art; but he knew nothing of the circumstance related of its being cemented in lime. From this on the fourth, I went to Grave Creek, twelve miles down the river. Here is a mound of earth, plainly the work of men's hands, called an Indian grave. It is of a conical form, in height about eighty feet. It ascends in an angle of about forty-five degrees. The diameter at the top is about sixty feet, the margin enclosing a regular concave, sunk about four feet in the center. Near the top stands an oak about three feet in diameter. I did not open this grave, but proceeded down the river about sixty miles to the mouth of the Muskingum; near this river are the remains of an ancient fortress, a plan of which I find has been transmitted to you by President Stiles. As this is the same I furnished him, it will be needless to attempt a more particular description of it. On the ruins of this Work has grown a white oak, now more than three feet in diameter, which has an appearance of having sprung from the decays of a tree in the same place. This, however, is conjectural, there not being so great evidence as to render the fact certain.

After two days spent here, I proceeded on my journey about three hundred and eighty miles without any extraordinary discoveries, to the great Miami. At the great Kanawha and sundry other places, we found Indian graves similar to, but not so large as, that at Grave Creek. Finding that the bones of a large animal had been discovered about thirty-two miles from the station, curiosity led me to make search for them. Accordingly an excursion was made to the Big-Bone-Lick, the place where these bones were found. This place is

a resort of all species of beasts in that country. A stream of brackish water runs through the land, which is a soft clay. About twenty acres are almost clear of trees and are surrounded by higher lands. At this place were found, some on the surface and some at the depth of four feet and more in the ground, the bones of the animal. An entire skeleton we did not find, but of different parts we brought off about four hundred pounds. A thigh bone entire measured forty-nine inches in length. Parts of several jaw bones were found, but not an entire one. Some teeth were found in and some out of the jaw, one of which I herewith send you. Part of a tusk we also had; two of the teeth I brought home; one, the corresponding tooth of the upper jaw, is at Yale College; the other bones we boxed and left at Pittsburgh. Of this animal the natives have no tradition but that which is so fabulous that no conjecture can be aided by it, unless it be that the animal was a carnivorous one. It is observable that the bones of this animal are only found near salt licks and in low, soft grounds.

In my progress further down the Ohio to the Rapids, nothing occurred worth communicating to your Society, unless the petrifications at the Rapids, and in sundry other places near the river, may be an object of attention. That elementary water does not possess this quality, I suppose to be an opinion too clear to admit of objection. The greatest quantity of petrifications I saw were at the Falls. I saw these when the water was low and the flat stones which extended across the river and over which the waters generally flow, were bare on both sides the river as much as one-fifth of a mile on each side. On the southeast side I observed no petrifications; on the northwest side they were in great plenty of almost every kind of vegetable production and in every stage of the process, from their native state to a perfect stone. Hornet's and bird's nests, nuts, roots, branches of trees, leaves, bones, &c. &c. were in great abundance. They appear at first by accident to be left resting on the stones, and the water exuding from the adjoining bank falls gently on the stones and glides almost imperceptibly over them, and bringing with it some adhesive quality which slightly fixes the resting body to the stone on which it lies, and an external incrustation is first formed around the body; whence the petrification is continued till the whole body becomes a perfect stone, retaining fully its original shape. It is evident that the stone on which these petrified vegetables are formed, is also a vegetable, and grows about the resting body, until in some instances the stone perfectly covers it. We were obliged, in many instances to make use of picks to break the stone or rock

to a depth of several inches, to sever the petrified body from it. Whether the matter possessing this petrifying quality is known, or can be discovered and separated from other earth so as to become useful as a cement or otherwise, I will not pretend to assert.

In this country I was informed that pieces of earthern ware, the common utensils of a family, are often dug out of the earth some feet under the surface; and at Muskingum in digging the trenches for their pickets, a number of pieces and one entire brick were found buried two or three feet deep. Not thinking it proper to open the mounds of earth supposed to contain the bones of the dead whilst the Indians were in treaty with us, I desired the Commanding Officer to open them at the Miami after the Indians had gone; and also left the same request at Muskingum with an officer of learning and great curiosity in his observations in the natural world; and to inform me of their discoveries, extracts of whose letters I herewith send you. The Indians have no tradition what nation ever buried their dead in the manner we discovered there. The trees on the Indian graves and on ancient fortifications (of which there are great numbers in that country) appear to be coeval with the adjoining forests. On the whole, I am of opinion that country has been thickly peopled by men to whom the necessary arts were known in a much greater degree than to the present native Indians of that region; but I am transgressing my own system and will return to facts only and let others form hypotheses. Among the Indian nations in general, I find an appearance of a radical similarity in language, but this is not universally true; the Huron or Wyandot language having no affinity to that of the Shawanese, Delawares and other nations. I do not remember to have heard a single word in that language which has the least affinity in sound with the words in other languages expressive of the same idea. A few examples follow:

	Shawanese.	Delaware.	Wyandot.
Bear.	Mau-quah.	Mough.	Un-yew-ech.
Water.	Nip-peh.	Beh.	San-doos-tea.
Smoke.	Mon-na-too.	Au-kook.	Kun-gun-fee.
Deer.	Seck-thee.	Au-took.	She-nun-took.
Nose.	O-chau-fee.	We-ke-un.	A-youh-joh.
Eye.	Ske-fa-coo.	Wus-kingd.	Yau-pe-dah.

Among the tribes there are as characteristic distinctions in feature, size and complexion as between the French, Dutch, English and other European nations, and no small difference in their manners and habits. The Shawanese are generally of a small size,

rather elegant in their features and a very cheerful and crafty people. Counseling among their old people and dancing among their young men and women takes up a great part of their time. The Delawares, on the contrary are a stout, robust people, have little of the vivacity of the Shawanese, and are more grave in their manners. They all agree in a firm belief of a Supreme Good Spirit, and also in the existence of evil spirits; one, the author of all good and the other the cause of all evil, and also in a state of future existence.

I could not satisfy myself that there was among them any set worship paid to the Deity, except in some nations once, and in others twice, in a year, a national feast was provided to which each tribe is convened; and the Chief, before they eat, makes a speech to them in which the duties they owe to the Supreme Being and to one another are explained; at the close of their repast he exhorts them to the practice of their duties, and the whole is ended with a solemn dance.

The customs prevailing in some of the tribes bear an affinity to the customs prevailing among the Jews (perhaps the same or nearly might have been practiced in early times by other eastern nations.) Women in travail are removed from the residence of the family to a hut provided at a distance; when delivered, their food is carried to them and deposited near their door for a number of days. The particular number I find I have not entered in my journal. After a certain number of days are ended, (during which the wife is excluded from society) she returns home with her infant and at the end of forty-five days is covered under the same blanket with her husband.

A woman, when her courses are upon her, maintains a silence, touches none of the family, eats by herself and retires.

Divorces are voluntary. Either party puts away and takes another mate at pleasure; but until the husband or wife is put away, adultery is considered a high crime. Among the Ottawas, it is punished by biting off the nose of the woman. The children, on a divorce, are divided; among some nations, if the number is uneven, the mother takes the greater part.

If any useful inquiries can be aided by anything I have transmitted to you, my intentions will have been fully answered.

I am, Sir, with greatest respect,

Your obedient servant,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To President Willard, Harvard College.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE OHIO COMPANY. PARSONS PRESENTS MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS FOR PURCHASE OF LANDS IN OHIO. BILL AUTHORIZING SALE TO COMPANY. ORDINANCE OF 1787. ORGANIZATION OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY. PARSONS APPOINTED CHIEF JUDGE. RATIFICATION OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

January, 1786—April, 1789

"THE early adventurers of the Northwestern Territory," says Judge Burnett in his Notes on that Territory, "were generally men who had spent the prime of their lives in the War of Independence. Many of them had exhausted their fortunes in maintaining the desperate struggle, and retired to the wilderness to conceal their poverty and avoid comparisons mortifying to their pride while struggling to maintain their families and improve their condition." Their attention was first directed to Ohio, not only on account of its fertile soil, its mild and healthy climate and its proximity to the settlements, but because, the Indian titles to Southern Ohio and all Ohio to the east of the Cuyahoga having been extinguished, and the country not being claimed by any particular State of the Union, Congress was in position to grant the land, either in exchange for the dishonored pay-certificates of the soldiers, or in fulfillment of engagements made with the officers and soldiers who should continue in service until the establishment of peace. On the 16th of June, 1783, two hundred and eighty-eight officers in the Continental Line petitioned Congress to mark out a territory within the present limits of Ohio, to be in time admitted as one of the "Confederated States of America," and to make provision for the survey of the land with reference to its use in payment of soldiers' claims and its sale to actual settlers. This petition was placed in Washington's hands by General Rufus Putnam, who transmitted it to Congress with a letter strongly commending the plan as promis-

ing not only great advantages to the settlers but to the country as well.

Congress having failed to act upon this petition, the scheme for the settlement of Ohio assumed another form. It was proposed by Rufus Putnam and Benjamin Tupper in January 1786, that an association be formed, to be named "The Ohio Company," the design of which should be to raise a fund in Continental Certificates with which to purchase lands of the United States in its Western Territory, for the benefit of the Company, thus enabling the Revolutionary Soldiers of New England to convert their pay-certificates into land. A meeting of the promoters of the plan was called at the "Bunch of Grapes Tavern" in Boston, at which it was determined to organize the proposed Company. The capital stock was to be one million dollars, divided into one thousand shares of the par value of one thousand dollars each, the price per share to subscribers to be, one thousand dollars in Continental Certificates, and ten dollars in coin to defray the expenses of the Company. Subscriptions to the stock were solicited by the agents of the Association, and when at a special meeting held at Brackett's Tavern in Boston, on the 8th of March, 1787, it appeared that two hundred and fifty shares had been subscribed, and that many others were inclined to take stock, it was unanimously resolved, "that three directors should be appointed for the Company, and that it should be their duty to make application immediately to the Honorable Congress for a private purchase of lands, and under such descriptions as they shall deem adequate to the purposes of the Company." General Samuel H. Parsons, General Rufus Putnam and the Rev. Manasseh Cutler, were thereupon unanimously chosen directors:

In a letter to Winthrop Sargent, Secretary of the Company, Cutler says:—

> I entirely approve of the propositions which General Putnam suggests should be made to Congress, and join with him in requesting General Parsons to make application to that Honorable Body as soon as possible. I have the fullest confidence that the negotiations will be conducted by him in a manner most advantageous to the Company. . . . Could the lands be immediately purchased, I have no doubt but that the subscriptions would go on

rapidly in this part of the country. . . . With regard to the location of the land, General Parsons and General Putnam are the judges.

In writing the same day to Nathan Dane, Delegate in Congress from Massachusetts, he says:—

General Parsons will make application to Congress in the name of the other directors, in order to make the purchase for the Company, and will propose terms which have been agreed on by the other directors. . . . If the lands can be immediately purchased on the terms the Company propose, we have the fullest assurance that the subscription for one million dollars will be completed in a short time. Many of the subscribers are men of very considerable property, who intend to become residents of that country. The spirit of emigration never ran higher with us than at this time, owing in a great measure to the general stagnation of business. If they are disappointed in their expectation Westward, they will turn their attention to some other quarter.

General Parsons, having been notified of his election as one of the directors of the Ohio Company and of the wish of his fellow directors that he should make the application to Congress in their behalf, wrote to William Samuel Johnson, who was still in Congress, respecting the matter:—

MIDDLETOWN, *April 23, 1787.*

DEAR SIR.—The Associated Ohio Company have so far accomplished their scheme, as to direct an application to Congress for the purchase, and have invested me with full powers to negotiate for them, and to fix the price and make the location. Our subscriptions are about five hundred shares and I conceive will soon amount to the one thousand shares proposed. I have enclosed a plan which has suggested itself to me as being reasonable under all circumstances. I wish, if you approve the proposal, that General Varnum, Mr. King, Colonel Carrington and the President may be consulted, with such others as you shall judge best to consult, before I come on, which will be the week after next. I shall depend on you and Mr. Mitchel joining the Association when you think it expedient. I wish to know whether the petition, founded on the enclosed propositions, can probably be taken up at the time I have mentioned and your opinion of the success of it. I think the probability of losing that country if no measures are taken, the embarrassed state

of our finances and the aid which may be expected from so large a sale at this time, will be inducements to comply with our proposals. We are in serious earnest and have our settlers now ready to march. I shall also be desirous, if it can be obtained, that Congress transport our settlers and furnish one years provision, for which consideration they will enlist for one year to serve in that country without pay or clothing. I wish you to communicate to Mr. Mitchel these proposals and I shall depend on his aid with you in prosecuting the matter. Wm. Wimble Esq. is Lieut. Governor. The Lord have mercy upon us and give us a full portion of patience.

Yr. obedient servt.,

To the Hon. Wm. S. Johnson, M. C. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Early in May, General Parsons proceeded to New York where Congress was then in session. The Monroe plan of organizing the Northwest Territory was being considered, and on the 9th of May, 1787, had its second reading, after which it was ordered that it be engrossed and on the morrow be read a third time and put upon its passage. The same day that this Ordinance was under consideration, the 9th of May, General Parsons placed before Congress a memorial asking that "a tract of country within the Western Territory of the United States at some convenient place, may be granted the Ohio Company at a reasonable price, upon its paying a sum not exceeding $1,000,000, nor less than $500,000, and that such of the Associators as, by the resolutions of Congress, are entitled to receive lands for their military services, may have their lands assigned to them within the aforesaid grant." In the language of Mr. Bancroft, "The plan interested everyone. For vague hopes of colonization, here stood a body of hardy pioneers; ready to lead the way to the rapid absorption of the domestic debt of the United States; selected from the choicest regiments of the army; capable of self defense; the protectors of all who should follow them; men skilled in the labors of the field and of artisans; enterprising and laborious; trained in the severe morality and strict orthodoxy of the New England villages of that day—all was changed. There was the same difference as between sending out recruiting officers and giving marching orders to a regular corps present with music and arms and banners. On the instant, the memorial was referred to a committee, consisting of Edward Carrington,

Rufus King, Nathan Dane, James Madison and Egbert Benson—a great committee; its older members of Congress having worthy associates in Carrington and Benson, of whom nothing was spoken, but in praise of their faultless integrity and rightness of intention."

The following is the full text of the Memorial:—

MEMORIAL OF THE OHIO COMPANY.

It is proposed by Samuel H. Parsons, Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler, for themselves and associates, to purchase of the United States the under mentioned tract in the Western Territory of the United States, on the following conditions, viz:

A certain tract of land in the Western Territory of the United States, bounded on the east by the western boundary of the seventh range of townships, on the south by the Ohio river, on the west by the river Scioto, and on the north by a due east and west line run from the northwest corner of the south township of the seventh range (reckoning from the Ohio) until it shall intersect the Scioto.

1. The price to be three shillings and sixpence, lawful money, or one-twelfth of a dollar, per acre, payable in any of the securities of the United States.

2. In payment for the lands, no interest shall be computed on the certificates paid in, provided that indents of interest, signed by the treasurer of the United States, shall be given to the purchasers for all arrearages of interest due on said certificates to the date of their payment, which indents shall be receivable in all the general requisitions, on which they may be paid in.

3. The payments of the above purchase to be made in the following manner, viz:

The first payment shall be within three months, computed from the date of this agreement, and shall amount to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The second payment shall be when the survey of the above tract is made, and shall amount to four hundred thousand dollars.

The remainder shall be paid in six equal instalments, at the expiration of every six months, computed from the date of the second payment.

4. When the first payment is made, an instrument of writing shall be delivered to the purchasers, signed by the President of the United States in Congress, and sealed with their seal, declaring that the United States have sold to Samuel H. Parsons, Rufus Putnam, Manasseh Cutler and their associates, for and in consideration

of one dollar per acre, the tract of land above described. On which the purchasers shall execute another instrument, binding themselves and their associates for the payment of the above purchase, agreeable to the above conditions.

And it shall be further declared, in the last mentioned instrument, that the purchasers shall not be entitled to take possession of any part of the lands contained in the above tract only in the following manner, viz: When the first payment is made, they shall have a right to take possession of a certain tract of land bounded east by the seventh range of townships, on the south by the Ohio river, on the west by a line run due north from the western cape of the Great Kanawha, so far as that from its termination, a line run east to the western boundary of the seventh range of townships may comprehend a quantity adequate to the first payment. When the second payment is made, they shall have a right to take possession of as great a quantity of land as shall be, when added to the aforesaid quantity, equal to the amount of one million dollars; which lands shall be bounded on the east by the western line of the seventh range of townships, on the south by the first location, on the west by a continuation of the line from the Great Kanawha, and on the north by an east and west line to the western boundary of the seventh range of townships. Military rights, in ratio of one to seven, to be admitted in the above mentioned possessions for the officers and soldiers of the late army who may be proprietors in the said lands, and also two townships for the establishment of a literary institution. When the first and second instalments are completely paid, and not before, the purchasers shall have a right to take possession of as great a quantity of lands as the several payments at that time made shall amount to, and this ratio of equal payment and possession shall be continued until the whole payment and possession is accomplished.

When the first and second payments are made, and the first instalment completed, then the purchasers shall receive a Federal deed for the quantity of land which shall be equal to the purchase of one million of dollars, comprehended within the boundaries above mentioned; and after this period they shall, from time to time, receive deeds for as great a quantity of lands as their several payments shall entitle them to at the price agreed on.

5. Notwithstanding the declaration of sale specified in the first mentioned instrument, the purchasers and their associates bind and oblige themselves, in case of failure in the payments as above mentioned, to renounce all claim or pretension of right to any lands for

which they have not made bona fide payment as before expressed, and the said Company or individuals thereof shall have no kind of right or pretence to enter on or take possession of any parts of said tracts, of which such failure is made, and the said tracts shall be free to be sold by Congress to any person or persons whatever; and in case the said tracts of which such failure is made be afterwards exposed to sale by Congress, the present purchasers shall be liable to make up the loss, if any, which may arise betwixt the price of the land so sold and what is hereby contracted for.

6. The purchasers shall have the right of preemption of three additional townships somewhere northerly of the tract above specified, at the price agreed on, and to take possession of the same when the payment thereof shall be duly made.

7. The aforesaid purchasers shall, at their own expense, within seven years from date hereof, lay off the whole tract which they shall purchase into townships and fractional parts of townships, and divide the same into lots according to the land ordinance, and make complete returns thereof to the board of treasury. Lots Nos. 8, 11 and 26, in each township and fractional part of townships, to be reserved for the future disposition of Congress. Lot No. 16 to be given perpetually by Congress to the maintenance of schools, and lot No. 29 to the purposes of religion in the said townships. Two townships near the center of the second specified tract, which comprehends the purchase amounting to the first mentioned million of dollars, and of good land, to be also given by Congress for the support of a literary institution, to be applied to the intended object by the legislature of the State.

This Memorial, to be found in Vol. XLI. of Papers of the Old Congress, Vol. VIII. 226, of the "Memorials," is in Parsons' own handwriting and endorsed, "Memorial of Samuel H. Parsons, agent of the associators for the purchase of lands on the Ohio. Read May 9th, 1787. Referred to Mr. Carrington, Mr. King, Mr. Dane, Mr. Madison, Mr. Benson. Acted on July 23, 1787 See Committee Book." The Memorial contains no objection to the Ordinance as a scheme of government, but it lifted the veil which concealed the magnificent future of the great Northwest, and made apparent to Congress the crudeness and inadequacy of the plan proposed, and suggested broader views and the need of more comprehensive provisions. Neither on the 10th, nor on the 11th, nor at any time was the

Ordinance called up for a third reading. The Memorial presented by Parsons in behalf of the Ohio Company put an end to its further consideration.

From the 11th of May to the 6th of July, there was no quorum, many of the Members of Congress being also members of the Constitutional Convention which convened at Philadelphia in May. Finding it useless to remain longer in New York, General Parsons returned to Middletown, and wrote his co-directors informing them of the situation of affairs. While awaiting their action, he writes Dr. Johnson in regard to his attending the Convention and the scheme of government which should be adopted by it; and asks whether he will join in the purchase of a township in the Connecticut lands in Ohio, now offered in exchange for State Securities:—

MIDDLETOWN, *June 4, 1787.*

SIR.—You already know my wishes respecting your attending the Convention, but of course you could not refuse the appointment. I need not inform you of my apprehensions of the people rejecting every form of government which will be adequate to the purposes of securing the citizens in the enjoyment of their property and giving dignity to our Nation. However, if my fears on this subject should prove well founded, I have confidence in the Convention that they will recommend such a system as, if adopted, will prove effectual, regardless of the opinions which may at present prevail. Will any measures effect the necessary purposes which will leave the States vested with sovereign power? Is it not necessary that all authority in the States should be derived from the supreme sovereignty of the Country, and the States be rendered amenable to the Supreme Power? This will reduce them to corporations and relieve us from the absurdity of *Imperium in Imperio.* I most ardently desire the prosperity of my Country; much, very much, depends on the wisdom and firmness of the Convention. No future Convention can be in circumstances to devise or effect the necessary reforms so effectually as the present. Their views and advice, even if rejected, may yet serve as a light to guide us to a safe port in an hour of great distress.

I wish to be informed whether I am to consider you a purchaser in the Connecticut lands, and in what proportion of a township. You know an entire township amounts to $11,000 in State securities. If you become an adventurer, you will please give me directions where to apply for your proportion, as I soon intend taking

out a patent and making a tour into that country if I procure a patent seasonably.

I am &c.,

To Dr. Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The directors of the Ohio Company upon receiving Parsons' report of their affairs, decided that Dr. Cutler, after conferring with Parsons, should proceed to New York and continue the negotiations. Dr. Cutler was a Massachusetts clergyman, of more than ordinary ability, a born lobbyist, remarkable for his powers of persuasion and for his knowledge of men. He was also a man of refined tastes, fond of nature and the natural sciences and very observing, as a persual of the entries in his most interesting diary of this journey will show. Leaving Boston, June 25, he reached Middletown on the 30th. Approaching the city from the high ground at the north, a great stretch of country on each side of the river and beyond the city, broken by hills and valleys, in full view, he becomes wildly enthusiastic over the rare beauty of the scene. "The first thought that struck me," he writes in his diary, "was that this vast tract was filled with gentlemen's country seats, surrounded with extensive gardens, fruit trees and groves. I fancied myself in the Elysian Fields, and gazed with delighted astonishment until the sun was set and the sable curtain of night was so far drawn as to close the enchanting scene." The Doctor's diary tells us of his visit in Middletown:—

I arrived at General Parsons' house early in the evening, before day-light-in, but it was too dark to make any observations on the city. He lives in the main street, opposite the church. His house is large and his situation delightful. The General was very complaisant and insisted on my lodging with him. He sent his servant immediately to the Rev. Mr. Huntington to inform him of my being in town, who, on his return, requested the General to come with me in the morning to his home.

Sunday, July 1.—This morning General Parsons introduced me to Mr. Huntington, but engaged me to dine with him. Mr. Huntington's Meeting House is a very large but ancient fabric. The house was crowded and the people in general dressed in a very tasty manner. I spent the evening at General Parsons' in company with my good old friend, Mr. Plumb, who has left the desk for the bar

and is set down as an attorney in this city. Mr. Russell, a late tutor, and several other gentlemen, spent the evening with us. Mrs. Parsons, who appears to be an amiable lady of rather a serious turn, treated me with the greatest kindness and attention.

Monday July 2.—It was at nine o'clock this morning before General Parsons and I had settled all our matters with respect to my business with Congress. He favored me with a large number of letters to Members of Congress and other gentlemen in New York.

Leaving Middletown on the 2d of July, and jogging along in his "one hoss shay" at the rate of from thirty to forty miles each day, through Wallingford, New Haven—where he was entertained by the College set—through Stratford, Fairfield, Stamford, Horseneck and Rye, crossing the Harlem at Kingsbridge, Dr. Cutler made his entry into New York by way of the Bowery, and stabled his horse at the sign of the "Plow and Harrow," a conspicuous hostelry on that ancient avenue. Having rid himself of the dust of travel, he walked downtown to Mr. Henderson's "a wholesale merchant who lived in Gold Street in genteel style," whose wife was a sister of his friend, President Willard of Harvard, and delivered the first of his forty-two letters of introduction. He was very politely received by Mr. Henderson and "urged to take lodgings with him while he tarried in the city." "Finding that no apology would avail, he accepted his invitation." The next day, the 6th, he delivered most of his introductory letters to the Members of Congress and presented his petition for purchasing lands for the Ohio Company and proposed terms and conditions of purchase. The evening he spent with several Members.

On Monday, the 9th, he waited on Mr. Thomas Hutchins, the United States Geographer General, who advised him by all means to make his location on the Muskingum, which was, in his opinion, decidedly the best part of the whole Western Country. The same day he discussed the terms of purchase with the Committee of Congress, (the same to which Parsons' Memorial was referred and of which Colonel Carrington was Chairman), but "we were so wide apart that there appeared little prospect of closing a contract." The meeting place of Congress at this time was in the City Hall, on Wall street at the head of Broad street, "near the center of the city." The evening he spent in

Hanover Square with Dr. Holton, for some time President of Congress, and several other Members. On the 10th, Cutler had another conference with the Committee, after which he dined with Colonel Duer, whose wife was a daughter of General Lord Stirling. He notes in his diary that Mr. Duer had not less than fifteen different sorts of wine at dinner, and, after the cloth was removed, besides most excellent bottled cider, porter and several other kinds of strong beer.

The Committee of Congress having in charge the Ordinance for the government of the Western Territory, very courteously sent a copy to Mr. Cutler, as agent of the Ohio Company, "with leave to make remarks and propose amendments." Availing himself of the opportunity thus afforded, Mr. Cutler proposed several amendments, all of which were embodied in the bill, excepting one which exempted the Territory from Continental taxation until it should become entitled to a full representation in Congress. "This could not be fully obtained, for it was considered as offering a premium for emigrants. They have granted us representation, with the right of debating, but not of voting, upon our being first subject to taxation." He does not say what were his other amendments, but presumably, like this, their purpose was to furnish extra inducements to settlers. To Cutler is ascribed by some, an important part both in formulating and in securing the passage of the Ordinance, but his diary furnishes little ground for this. All he claims to have done was to suggest a few amendments, immediately after which he left for Philadelphia, making no effort to urge their adoption or secure the passage of the bill. The Ordinance was passed during his absence and without his knowledge or aid. "It was in a degree new modeled," he says after examining a copy. So far as the governmental machinery is concerned, the Ordinance does not differ essentially from that which was laid aside upon the presentation of Parsons' Memorial. The new and valuable principles introduced, were the same which ever since May were being discussed and formulated in the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia. Many Members of Congress being members also of the Convention and familiar with its conclusions, it would be surprising if the same conclusions had not been made a part of the Ordinance. The fact that these new principles had already

been thought out and put in form and needed merely to be attached to that part of the old Ordinance providing for the machinery of government, accounts for the astonishing accomplishment of the new Committee on the Ordinance, appointed on the 9th of July. The bill was reported on the 11th, read the second time on the 12th, and on the 13th became a law, all in four days, and became known in history as the famous Ordinance of 1787.

The distinguishing feature of the Ordinance is, the Sixth Article prohibiting slavery Northwest of the Ohio. Mr. Dane says: "When I drew the Ordinance, I had no idea the States would agree to this Article, as only Massachusetts of the Eastern States was present, and therefore omitted it in the draft; but finding the House favorably disposed on the subject, after we had completed the other parts, I moved the Article, which was agreed to without opposition."

In 1784, a Committee composed of Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, Mr. Chase of Maryland and Mr. Howell of Rhode Island, had submitted to Congress a plan for the government of the Western Territory prohibiting slavery or involuntary servitude therein after the year 1800, except for crime, and giving names to the States into which the Territory was to be divided. Both these provisions were stricken out, after which the plan was adopted and remained the law until 1787, when it was repealed. The State names with which Jefferson proposed to decorate the map of the Northwest, were: Sylvania, Michigania, Chersonesus, Assenisipia, Metropotamia, Illinoia, Saratoga, Washington, Polypotamia and Pelisipia. In 1785, an attempt was made to amend the prohibition into the Ordinance of 1784, and make it a compact between these States and the United States, but the amendment, which was referred to the Committee of the Whole, was never reported. After the proposal of the Ohio emigration scheme, the matter took on a new aspect, backed as it was by men of the prominence and known practical ability of Parsons and Putnam, and all opposition to the prohibition of slavery in the Territory vanished. This unanimity, however, was based rather on economic than moral considerations, slavery at this time being regarded as a species of apprenticeship, undesirable only when unprofitable. "The clause respecting

slavery," writes Grayson of Virginia to Monroe, in August of this year, "was agreed to by the Southern Members for the purpose of preventing tobacco and indigo from being made on the northwest side of the Ohio, as well as for several political reasons." And John Randolph of the same State, in March, 1802, reporting adversely upon a Memorial of General William Henry Harrison and other citizens of Indiana Territory, asking Congress to suspend the operation of the Sixth Article of the Ordinance so that slave labor could be employed in the Territory, says:—

> The rapid population of the State of Ohio sufficiently evinces, in the opinion of your Committee, that the labor of slaves is not necessary to promote the growth and settlement of colonies in that region; that this labor, demonstrably the dearest of any, can only be employed to advantage in the cultivation of products more valuable than any known to that quarter of the United States; that the Committee deem it highly dangerous and inexpedient to impair a provision wisely calculated to promote the happiness and prosperity of the Northwestern Country, and to give strength and security to that extensive frontier. In the salutary operation of this sagacious and benevolent restraint, it is believed that the inhabitants of Indiana will, at no distant day, find ample remuneration for a temporary privation of labor and of emigration.

Having returned from Philadelphia on the 18th, and the Ordinance being out of the way, Cutler now hoped to secure the attention of Congress to his scheme of purchase, in regard to which there was considerable difference of opinion among the members. He wished to ascertain who were for and who were against his scheme, and, if possible, to bring his opponents over. Colonel Duer of New York, who had been quick to see the advantage of such a sale to the public credit and to the adjoining lands, promised to assist him. "Grayson, R. H. Lee and Carrington," as reads his diary, "are certainly my warm advocates. Holton, I think, may be trusted. Dane must be carefully watched, notwithstanding his professions. Clarke, Bingham, Yates, Kearney and Few are troublesome fellows. They must be attacked by my friends at their lodgings. If they can be brought over, I shall succeed; if not, my business is at an end."

On the 19th, an Ordinance was proposed in answer to Cutler's petition, but the terms it contained were not satisfactory; "he would prefer purchasing lands of some of the States, who would give incomparably better terms, and therefore, proposed to leave the city immediately." His friends insisted upon his remaining, and, "if I desired it," would take up the matter again. "Colonel Duer at this juncture," says the diary, "came to me with proposals from a number of the principal characters in the city, to extend our contract, and take in another company, but that it should be kept a profound secret. He explained the plan they had concerted, and offered me generous conditions if I would accomplish the business for them." The plan "struck Cutler agreeably," but he deemed it policy to "hold up the idea of giving up a contract with Congress, and making a contract with some of the States." "The Committee were mortified, and did not know what to say, but still urged another attempt;" "I left them in that state, but afterwards explained my views to Mr. Duer, and promised to consider his proposals." The next day, Saturday, several Members of Congress called on Cutler and "discovered much anxiety about a contract," but he cannily affected great indifference, and talked of the advantages of a contract with some of the States. "This, I found, had the desired effect." "At length, I told them if Congress would accede to the terms I had proposed, I would extend the purchase to the tenth township from the Ohio, and to the Scioto, inclusively, by which Congress would pay near four millions of the National debt." This offer to more than double the quantity of land to be purchased, though apparently in behalf of the Ohio Company, was really made to include the large tract of Duer's company.

On Monday, July 23, Congress again took up the matter, and, at three o'clock, passed an Ordinance which must have been the action meant by the endorsement of Parsons' Memorial, "Acted on July 23, 1787." The report of the Committee to which it was referred, is endorsed by its Chairman, Colonel Carrington, in his own hand, "Report of Committee on Memorial of S. H. Parsons;" and also by Mr. Thompson, Secretary of Congress, "Report of Mr. Carrington, Mr. King, Mr. Dane, Mr. Madison, Mr. Benson. Read July 10, 1787.

Order for the day the 11th;" but it does not appear what disposition was made of the report or whether the Ordinance of July 23, was its recommendation. This Ordinance, however, was not entirely satisfactory, and Cutler pulled another string. Up to this time he had openly supported General Parsons for the Governorship, but finding that General St. Clair, then President of Congress, had secured a large interest with the Southern Members, and suspecting that his well-known advocacy of Parsons' claim might be an impediment in the way of his plans, he took occasion to declare that if General Parsons could have the appointment of First Judge and Sargent that of Secretary, he should be satisfied, and "would solicit the Eastern Members in favor of such an arrangement." The subsequent complaisance of St. Clair and his assurance that he would make every possible exertion to prevail on Congress to accept the "terms in our letter," fully convinced Cutler "that it was good policy to give up Parsons and openly appear solicitous that St. Clair might be appointed Governor." He was told by several gentlemen that "since St. Clair and his friends had been informed that we had given up Parsons, and that I had solicited the Eastern Members in his favor, our matters went on much better."

On the 27th a modification of the Ordinance was secured, making it conform to the "terms stated in our letter without the least variation." "By this Ordinance," writes Cutler, "we obtained the grant of near five million acres of land, amounting to three and one-half million of dollars, one million and a half acres for the Ohio Company, and the remainder for a private speculation in which many of the principal characters in America are concerned. Without connecting this speculation, similar terms could not have been obtained for the Ohio Company." This "speculation" was the Scioto Company. Duer's injunction of secrecy related to the fact that the increased amount of land was not for the Ohio, but for the Scioto Company. Had this fact been made public, doubtless both projects would have been defeated; but, being kept secret, the influence of the "principal characters" let into the speculation was sufficient to secure the passage of the Ordinance. The Scioto speculation terminated disastrously, and in the end carried Duer down with it. The Ohio Company was measurably successful,

but the subscription never reached the million dollar mark, and finally, by a liberal compromise, deeds were given to the directors for more than a million acres of land.

Immediately after the passage of the Ordinance, Dr. Cutler commenced his homeward journey, stopping at Middletown on the way to confer with General Parsons. Of this visit, he writes in his diary:—

> When I had informed General Parsons of my negotiations with Congress, I had the pleasure to find it not only met his approbation, but he expressed his astonishment that I had obtained terms so advantageous, which he said were far beyond his expectations. He assured me that he preferred the appointment of First Judge to that of Governor, especially if General St. Clair was the Governor. He proposed writing to General St. Clair and his friends in Congress, that they would procure me an appointment on the same bench; but I absolutely declined, assuring him that I had no wish to go into the civil line. Mrs. Parsons was exceedingly complaisant. She said they looked hard for me on Saturday night, and that it was hoped that I should preach for them yesterday, especially as Mr. Huntington was gone to Windham, and that the people were much disappointed at my not coming. We spent a very long and agreeable evening, for we did not go to bed until half after one.

Upon Cutler's return to Boston, a meeting of the Ohio Company was held at the "Bunch of Grapes Tavern" (August 29), at which he reported that the lands to be conveyed to the Company in consideration of the million of dollars to be raised by subscription, are bounded on the east by the western boundary of the seventh range of townships; south by the Ohio; west by a meridian line drawn through the western cape of the Great Kanawha River, and extending so far north that a due east and west line from the seventh range of townships to the said meridian line shall include the whole." This tract differs from that described in Parsons' Memorial (to which Cutler and others objected), which included the river front to the Scioto and extended northerly only to an east and west line running from the northwest corner of the south township of the seventh range to the Scioto. The tract also extended northerly far enough to include lands to be set apart for the support of schools and a University and for religious purposes, soldier's bounties and

other objects. It was resolved by the meeting that a tract four miles in front by two miles in depth be reserved for a city and commons, to be laid out in squares with streets one hundred feet in width, and that one hundred houses be enclosed for the reception of settlers. His proceedings in New York having been approved, Cutler returned to the city and, on the 27th of October, completed his contract for "nearly six million acres of land," and with Major Sargent signed the "Indented Agreement in two distinct contracts, one for the Ohio Company and the other for the Scioto Company, the greatest private contract ever made in America." Returning, he "rode to Hartford early the 31st, and dined there that day with General Parsons."

On Friday, the 5th of October, 1787, Congress proceeded to organize the Western Territory by electing Arthur St. Clair, Governor; Samuel Holden Parsons, James M. Varnum and John Armstrong, Judges. Mr. Armstrong declining, John Cleves Symmes was afterwards appointed to the vacancy. The territory within their jurisdiction included the present States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The following is a copy of General Parsons' commission as Judge of the Northwest Territory:—

The United States in Congress assembled, to Samuel Holden Parsons, Esq.

We, reposing special trust and confidence in your wisdom, uprightness and integrity, have constituted and appointed, and by these presents do constitute and appoint, you, the said Samuel Holden Parsons, one of the judges in and over the Territory of the United States north-west of the river Ohio, with full power and authority, in conjunction with one or more of the judges of said territory, to form a court, with all the powers and authorities incident to a court having a common law jurisdiction, and to exercise all such powers, and perform and execute all the duties directed by the ordinance of the 13th of July, 1787, entitled, "An ordinance for the government of the territory north-west of the river Ohio," which is hereto affixed; giving to you, the said Samuel Holden Parsons, all the powers and authorities assigned to a judge of the said territory, in and by the ordinance aforesaid; and we do enjoin all persons to pay due obedience to this our commission. This commission to con-

tinue and be in force, during good behavior, or during the existence of the government established by the ordinance aforesaid. You residing within the said territory.

In testimony whereof &c.

The Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States assembled in Philadelphia in May, 1787, and completed its work on the 12th of September following. The Constitution was submitted to Congress the 28th, and was sent by that Body to the several State Legislatures, by which conventions were called to consider it. In Connecticut, the Legislature, on the 16th of October, called a Convention by a unanimous vote. "To this Convention," says Bancroft, "were chosen the retired and the present highest officers of its Government; the judges of its Courts; ministers of the Gospel; and nearly sixty who had fought for Independence." General Parsons was a member of this Convention, and among the Fairfield members, we find our old acquaintance, the spy Heron.

In January, 1778, the Convention met at Hartford. Having organized in the State House, it adjourned to the more capacious North Meeting House, where the people could witness its proceedings and listen to the debates. It was agreed that no vote should be taken until the whole Constitution had been read and debated, section by section. On the 9th, the Convention was ready to vote, and of the one hundred and sixty-eight ballots cast, one hundred and twenty-eight were for the Constitution.

In reply to a letter from Parsons announcing the action of Connecticut, General Knox, on the 13th, wrote:—

I thank you a thousand times for the agreeable news contained in your note of Wednesday evening. The business now draws to a crisis. If Massachusetts adopts it with a considerable majority, all will go well, otherwise we must all I believe, become inhabitants of Ohio. No war between England and France.

I am affectionately,

To General Parsons. J. KNOX.

Connecticut was the fifth State to ratify the Constitution, but Georgia, whose first delegate in Congress and one of her

Signers of the Declaration of Independence, Governor Lyman Hall, was a Connecticut man, and whose early settlers were, so many of them, Connecticut men, had anticipated her in her action by one week. New Hampshire enjoys the distinction of completing by her ratification, the number of States necessary for the establishment of the Constitution. Virginia and New York following within a month, the Continental Congress prepared to organize the new government, and on the 13th of September

Resolved, That the first Wednesday in January next be the day for appointing Electors in the several States, which, before the said day, shall have ratified the said Constitution; that the first Wednesday in February next be the day for the Electors to assemble in their respective States, and vote for a President; and that the first Wednesday in March be the time, and the present seat of Congress (New York) the place, for commencing the proceedings under the said Constitution.

In pursuance of this resolution, proceedings were commenced under the Constitution on the 4th of March, 1789, by the assembling of the Senate and Representatives in the Chambers provided for their use in the City Hall, which at that time stood on the north side of Wall Street, opposite the head of Broad Street; but, in the absence of a quorum, the House was not able to organize until April 1, and the Senate not until April 6, at which time the electoral votes were counted in the presence of the two Houses, and George Washington was declared to be unanimously elected President, and John Adams duly elected Vice-President.

The inaugural ceremonies took place the 30th, on the balcony in front of the Senate Chamber, in the presence of a great concourse of people. The President was attended by the Vice-President and Senators, by the Speaker and Representatives and by other prominent personages. The oath of office was administered by Chancellor Livingston of the State of New York amid the loud acclaim of the populace, " Long Live George Washington, President of the United States." Returning to the Senate Chamber, the President delivered his inaugural address to the two Houses in joint session, after which the whole

assembly marched in solemn procession to St. Pauls to render thanks and invoke the Divine Blessing on the new Government. The ceremonies concluded, the President was escorted to the Mansion prepared for his residence in Cherry Street near Franklin Square, then the most fashionable part of the city. The day ended with fireworks and illuminations. The organization of the Government was now completed, and the new Republic commenced its eventful career.

CHAPTER XXVII

SETTLEMENT OF OHIO. LETTERS TO GENERAL WASHINGTON AND DR. CUTLER. ARRIVAL OF ST. CLAIR, PARSONS AND VARNUM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN THE TERRITORY. THEY PREPARE A CODE OF LAWS. CELEBRATION OF THE FOURTH OF JULY. PARSONS' THANKSGIVING SERMON. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW SETTLEMENT.

December, 1787—December, 1788

IN the Autumn of 1787, at a meeting held at Brackett's Tavern in Boston, the shareholders of the Ohio Company resolved to send a party of skilled mechanics and laborers to the headwaters of the Ohio to build boats suitable for transporting men and provisions, in order to be ready at the opening of Spring to descend the river and commence the proposed settlement at the mouth of the Muskingum. The place selected for operations, was Sumrill's Ferry on the Youghiogheny, about thirty miles above Pittsburgh. The first division of the pioneers, about twenty of whom were employees of the Company, left Danvers in Massachusetts, December the 3d, under the command of Major Haffield White, and Captain Ezra Putnam, the former a captain during the war in Colonel Rufus Putnam's Fifth Massachusetts. The second division, comprising the surveyors and the remainder of the pioneers, assembled at Hartford on the 1st of January, 1788. General Rufus Putnam was to have accompanied this party, but having to go by the way of New York on business for the Company, Colonel Sproat, second in command, assumed control. Putnam overtook the party on the 24th at Swatara Creek in Pennsylvania, where it had been greatly delayed in crossing on account of the ice. Here commenced the serious difficulties of their journey. The very night the crossing was effected, the roads became so blocked by a heavy fall of snow, that during the next five days it was impossible to get the wagons further than the little village of Strawsburgh at the foot of the Tuscarawas Mountains. Learning that the mountain roads had become impassable for their wagons,

they abandoned them and built sledges to take their place. To these the horses were harnessed tandem and driven along a track broken by the men walking single file. In this way the mountains were crossed and Sumrill's Ferry reached after two weeks of incessant labor. Here they found the party under Major White, which had arrived two weeks before.

Preparations were now commenced in earnest under the supervision of General Putnam, and by the 1st of April, the "Adventure Galley," as they called it, a decked boat forty-five feet in length and twelve feet beam, afterwards rechristened the "Mayflower," was safely launched and ready for its voyage. Embarking with their stores, accompanied by a flat-boat and three canoes, these Pilgrim Fathers of the West floated down the Alleghany, past Pittsburgh, out into the Ohio, and, on the 8th of April, arrived at the mouth of the Muskingum, where they were warmly welcomed by the garrison at Fort Harmar and a party of Delawares encamped there to trade with the soldiers. Landing on the point opposite the Fort, they proceeded to lay the foundations of their city, which, not to be behind old Rome, was to have its Campus Martius, Via Sacra and Capitolium. Selecting the summit of an ancient fortification of the Mound-Builders for the Campus Martius, they capped it with a huge building of hewn logs, two stories in height, with blockhouses at the angles, and placed within its protecting walls, their women and children. The adjacent lands, in accordance with the plan agreed upon by the Directors of the Company, they divided into sixty city blocks, three hundred and sixty feet square, arranged in an oblong form, ten in front and six in depth, and separated by avenues one hundred feet in width. Four of these blocks were reserved for public uses, and the remaining fifty-six were subdivided into house lots. At a convenient distance from the city, they laid out one thousand lots of eight acres each, one of which, together with one city lot, was to be assigned by lot to each proprietary share.

The work of felling trees, clearing the ground, plowing and planting proceeded rapidly under the hands of these hardy New Englanders. The tents, which at first were their only shelter, were being fast displaced by comfortable houses. Before the winter set in, more than sixty dwellings had been completed, but,

the new arrivals. By the end of the year, the little settlement could boast a population of one hundred and thirty-two men, besides women and children, in all, nearly two hundred souls. Except in this one settlement, there was not at this time a single white family within the present bounds of Ohio. Major Denny, then stationed at Fort Harmar, writes of them in his diary: "These people appear the most happy folks in the world, greatly satisfied with their new purchase. They certainly are the best informed, most courteous and civil strangers of any I have yet met with. The order and regularity observed by all, their sober deportment and perfect submission to the constituted authorities, must tend much to promote their settlements." The Boston people had called the new city "Adelphia," but at the first meeting of the Directors held on the ground, there being present, Generals Parsons, Putnam and Varnum, it was named "Marietta" in honor of the French Queen, Marie Antoinette, whose kindly offices during the dark days of the Revolution these old soldiers had not forgotten.

General Parsons left Middletown for the Muskingum early in April. No letters have been found showing his precise route, but we know that he passed through Carlisle in Pennsylvania. He seems to have made the long journey alone, and to have left home much depressed in spirit, as if burdened with a premonition of the sad fate which awaited him.

The following letter of advice to his daughters, written soon after his departure, is interesting, not only as showing the serious tone apt to pervade the family letters of the period in New England, but as giving an inner view of the character of the man:—

April 12th, 1788.

My Dear Children.—The sorrow expressed in parting with your father most sensibly affected me. The tear of sympathy suppressed my efforts to give advice, perhaps, and most probably, the last you will ever have an opportunity of receiving from the lips of your affectionate parent. The time cannot be more profitably spent this evening than by recalling the scenes of anxiety at our parting, and giving you the advice, which if pursued, will make you comfortable in life, and happy in the reflection of that event which must soon part you from all your friends in this world.

A kind and courteous behavior to one another, a civil deportment among your equals, a benevolent temper towards your inferiors and a dutiful respect to your superiors in age or rank, will always mark you as persons of sensibility and attention, while the opposite conduct will sink you into disgrace and contempt. Remember your own honor is too nearly connected with that of each other to expect it to be maintained on the sacrifice of a brother's or a sister's feelings.

Remember that whatever the world may pretend, no persons are so much respected as those whose constant behavior evidences an habitual principle of virtue and religion, nor can any considerations support your tender minds under misfortunes and afflictions, but a full confidence in the great Governor of the world, and a reliance on Him for help in every difficulty and danger. I cannot but reflect with concern that I have so much neglected to impress your minds with ideas of your constant dependence on the Supreme Being for all you possess and enjoy. The justice of His administrations and a consciousness of our ill returns for his favors may fill our minds with apprehensions of destruction from His hand whom we have so often offended, but, my children, remember he is a God of mercy as well as justice. Look into that best of books, your Bible, and you will there find consolation under your afflictions, and there learn a way to be relieved from all your troubles. Carefully attend to the precepts you there find, and no troubles you here experience can long afflict you. Let your attention be particularly called to your mother's comfort; remember she is now to be your adviser and director in all your conduct. The want of your father I am sure you will most sensibly feel, but remember you have a constant guardian, your Heavenly father; in Him put your trust and you will never have reason to repent it. Give yourselves to industry and the practice of every virtue. I shall always be happy in hearing of your good conduct. Give yourself no distressing hours about me; that Being who has hitherto preserved me will continue to help and support me under my complicated troubles whilst he has anything for me to do in this world. On Him I hope and rely.

I don't think it probable you will ever see me again. I have very little expectation of returning to New England again; my duty calls me away from you. I most ardently wish you may come to me, but on this subject I can say very little.

Adieu my dear children; may you merit Heaven's best blessings.

S. H. Parsons.

At this time but six States, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Georgia, had ratified the

new constitution, and the general feeling was that the success of the proposed plan of government depended upon the action of Virginia. Having taken an active part in the Connecticut Convention, General Parsons, upon his arrival at Carlisle, wrote to General Washington as follows, expressing his anxiety as to the sentiment of Virginia and alluding to the future intimate relations which must exist between the East and the West should the proposed government be established:—

CARLISLE, PA., *April 21st, 1788.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I am now on my road to the settlements forming on the Ohio River, and take this only method in my power to take leave of your Excellency and to assure you of my most cordial wishes for your happiness. Should any occurrences render my services in that country of use to you, I shall never be more happy than in devoting myself to the execution of your wishes. The state of our country must give very sensible trouble to every good citizen and to none more than to your Excellency who has acted so conspicuous a part in effecting our Independence. In the eastern States I think opposition to the Federal Government is nearly ended. We have our eyes now turned to Virginia; if there is wisdom to adopt the proposed plan in that State, I think we may hope to restore to our nation the honor their folly has lost them. I view the adoption of the present plan with all its imperfections as the only means of preserving the Union of the States and securing the happiness of all parts of this extensive country. I feel myself deeply interested in this subject as it will affect the country of which I am now commencing as an inhabitant. I am sure it must ever be our interest to continue connection with the Atlantic States. To them we must look ever for protection and from them we can receive such supplies as we want with more facility than from any other neighbor; but without an efficient government we can expect no benefits of a connection, and I fear it will lead us to improper measures. The navigation of the Potomac is very interesting to our settlement. If it is perfected according to the proposed scheme, we shall save a land transportation of five hundred miles, the route we at present pursue. Our new settlement progresses rapidly. Two hundred families will be within our city by July, and I think we are sure of one thousand families from New England within one year if we remain in peace.

I am with every sentiment of esteem and respect,

Yr. Excellency's obt. servt.,

To General Washington. S. H. PARSONS.

General Washington had carefully studied the subject of inland navigation during a tour through New York in 1783, made in company with Governor Clinton while waiting for the definitive treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain. At this time he was especially interested in a project to connect by slack-water navigation the navigable waters of the Potomac with the great rivers of the West. The plan proposed—the same subsequently adopted and put into successful operation between Schenectady and Oneida Lake by way of the Mohawk and Wood Creek—was to improve the navigation by short canals around the rifts and shallows, and by dams where it was necessary to increase the depth of the water. The expense of the undertaking, however, postponed its execution until the construction of the Erie Canal, connecting the Hudson and the Lakes, after which it became financially impracticable.

General Parsons and Major Sargent arrived at Pittsburgh, Sunday, May 11. Colonel May of Connecticut, then quartered on the opposite side of the river from Pittsburgh, mentions in his diary some incidents of their stay in that place:—

May 12th. About 4 o'clock, Generals Harmar, Parsons and several other gentlemen called. They crossed the river in the "Congress" barge, fifty-two feet long and rowed by twelve men in white uniforms and caps. The gentlemen invited me to take a row with them up the Alleghany River.

Sunday, the 18th. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Generals Parsons and Hamar, and a Mr. White, Member of Congress from North Carolina, came over and paid me a visit, which was very agreeable. They spent one hour on this side and then returned.

On the 26th of May, General Parsons and Major Sargent arrived at Marietta, having, perhaps, come down the river with General Harmar in his twelve-oared barge. The following letter to his wife, General Parsons dates from the Muskingum, June 1, 1788:—

I arrived here last Monday from Pittsburg. The rains have been so frequent since General Putnam came to this place, which was not until the eighth of April, that very little progress has been made in erecting buildings to cover the people. After the survey of the eight acre lots, they have been employed in preparing and planting the grounds on which the city is to be built. We have now

about one hundred and thirty acres cleared and planted. I have four acres in corn and intend having about three acres more this season.

The place for our town is about three fourths of a mile from the Ohio, on the east side of the Muskingum and about five hundred yards from that River on an elevated plat of ground commanding a most beautiful and extensive view of both rivers. The adjoining lands are excellent—no lands can be better—but are in general heavily timbered. You have been very fortunate in your draft. Your lot adjoins the Ohio, one mile from town in a most delightful situation and is excelled by no land in quality. I have ten acres near it which I intend to clear, and eight acres within three fourths of a mile of the town in another direction. This is all I shall be able to command near the town, my other lots being from two to eight miles distant. I shall begin to-morrow to build my house and hope by the end of the week to be settled in a family of my own. We have now about one hundred and forty men on the grounds and about that number are expected to arrive soon. No families are here yet; those who have brought them over the mountains have left them in the vicinity of the Monongahela. We shall begin our Fort and buildings in it this week. The Indians here appear very friendly and are frequently with us. The treaty will be held in July. On the issue of that very much depends. Should that issue fortunately for us, we shall very soon become a large settlement. Every prospect as to the goodness of our lands and the facility of producing the means of living, equal my most sanguine hopes, and I find all the people appear fully satisfied. I can receive a guinea per acre for one of my eight-acre lots if I will sell, and your lot will bring the same price, but I cannot part with either of them. I have sold one of my 116 acre lots for one hundred dollars to be paid in clearing my lands near the city. The purchase is in great demand and high estimation, and I have yet a hope, if I live, to place the family in easy circumstances.

General Varnum went by way of Baltimore and has not yet arrived. The Indians have done some mischief in Kentucky and on the Wabash, but all things are quiet in this quarter. Give a Father's blessing to all our dear children and believe me, my dear, Your very affectionate and faithful.

SAML. H. PARSONS.

P. S.—*7th of June.* General Varnum has arrived.

The arrival of Generals Parsons and Varnum making, with General Putnam, a quorum of the directors of the Ohio Company, the first meeting of the Board in Marietta was held on the

2d of July. The result of the distribution of the eight-acre lots having caused considerable dissatisfaction, it was voted at this meeting to divide the three thousand acres reserved for City Commons, into three-acre lots for distribution. The name of the city was changed at this meeting from Adelphia to Marietta.

The following extract from Colonel May's diary gives a picture of life in the early days of the settlement:—

Sunday, June 8th.—A beautiful day. No preaching established as yet. About noon General Harmar's barge came to carry a number of us to dine. The gentlemen who went over were, Generals Parsons, Putnam and Varnum; Colonels Sproat, Battelle, Meigs and May; Major Sargent and Mr. Rice. At 3 o'clock, dinner on the table, and as elegant a table as any in Boston. Amongst the solids were bacon gammon, venison tongues, roast and boiled lamb, barbacued and *a la mode* beef, perch and catfish, lobsters and oysters. For vegetables, green peas, radishes and salads. For drink, spirits, excellent wine, brandy and beer. We spent the afternoon, drank tea, crossed the River and back again and went to rest."

June 17, Colonel May notes:—

This evening Judge Parsons' and General Varnum's commissions were read; also regulations for the government of the people. In fact by-laws were very much wanted. Officers were named to command the militia; guards to be mounted every evening; all males more than fifteen years old to appear under arms every Sunday.

Great preparations were making at this time for the treaty which was expected to be held with the Indians on the arrival of Governor St. Clair. Two large keel boats—one eighty-five feet long, the other seventy-two—laden with merchandise for use in the treaty, arrived at Marietta on the 14th of June. The next day the boats went up the Muskingum to the Forks of the River, about sixty miles, to prepare to build a Council House. The latter part of the month a party of thirty men was sent up to the Forks with provisions and presents. On the night of July 12, a party of Indians attacked those who were guarding the stores, killing four and wounding several others. In consequence of this, Major McDowell was sent up with a command to bring the goods back to Marietta. This affair delayed the treaty until the following December.

The 4th of July, 1788, was a memorable day for Marietta, for there was held the first celebration of the Declaration of Independence in the great Northwest. The day was ushered in with the firing of the guns of Fort Harmar. There was a procession of the citizens and the soldiery, and a public dinner which was spread under a long bower built of intertwined oak and maple boughs near the North Point at the mouth of the Muskingum. The wealth of the rivers and forests was drawn upon to enrich the feast. Among the delicacies served was a pike weighing one hundred pounds. Patriotic toasts were given and an eloquent oration delivered by Judge Varnum. Lamenting the absence of his Excellency, Governor St. Clair, "upon this joyous occasion," with uplifted hands he prays, "May he soon arrive;" and then, turning first towards one and then towards the other, he thus apostrophizes the all unconscious rivers flowing on either side: "Thou, gently flowing Ohio, whose surface, as conscious of thy unequalled majesty, reflecteth no image but the grandeur of the impending heaven, bear him, O, bear him safely to this anxious spot. And thou, beautiful, transparent Muskingum, swell at the moment of his approach, and reflect no objects but of pleasure and delight." Thus, in the fertile soil of Ohio, by a Rhode Island man, the first seeds of Western eloquence were sown.

June 15, Major Doughty went up the river with a small detachment of troops, to demolish Fort McIntosh and to escort Governor St. Clair to Marietta. On the 9th of July, Governor St. Clair arrived at Fort Harmar and was received by the garrison and the citizens with due honors; but history is silent as to the "reflections" of the rivers on this occasion, and fails to state whether "the beautiful, transparent Muskingum" swelled at his approach. Tuesday, July 15, was another memorable day for Marietta, for in the new settlement, with appropriate ceremonies, civil government was duly established as provided in the "Ordinance of 1787 for the government of the territory of the United States northwest of the Ohio." Landing from the twelve-oared barge in which he had been rowed over from the Fort, Governor St. Clair made his public entry into the Bower attended by the Territorial Judges, Messrs. Parsons and Varnum, and by the Secretary, Winthrop Sargent. Here he was received by Rufus Putnam and the assembled

citizens "with the most sincere and unreserved congratulations." After a brief acknowledgment by the Governor of the welcome accorded him, Secretary Sargent, as his minutes state, read the "Ordinance of the Honorable Congress for the government of the Territory, the Commissions of the Governor, the Honorable Judges, Samuel Holden Parsons and James Mitchell Varnum and the Secretary's, after which his Excellency addressed the people assembled." In reply to his Excellency, a formal address was presented by General Putnam in behalf of the citizens. Such was the humble beginning of the five great States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, into which the Territory of the Northwest, then an almost unexplored wilderness, was subsequently divided, all of which, pursuant to the Ordinance, were now included in a single District for the purposes of temporary government.

The first duty of the Governor and Judges under the Ordinance, was to prepare a Civil and Criminal Code for the Territory. The Ordinance provides that "the Governor and Judges, or a majority of them, shall adopt and publish in the District such laws of the original States, criminal and civil, as may be necessary and best suited to the circumstances of the District, and report them to Congress from time to time, which laws shall be in force in the District until the organization of the General Assembly therein, unless disapproved by Congress. For the prevention of crimes and injuries, the laws to be adopted or made shall have force in all parts of the District." The question immediately arose as to whether they were confined in their legislation to the letter of existing enactments, or could modify them to meet changed conditions. The Governor, giving a narrow significance to the word "laws" in the foregoing clause of the Ordinance, insisted that the statutes of the original States, so far as adopted, must be verbatim, else they would be enacting instead of adopting laws; but the Judges, with a clearer and more practical comprehension of the business entrusted to them, replied to the Governor's question as to "the precise meaning which they affixed to the term," that "by 'laws,' is meant the legal Codes or Systems of the original States in their general nature and spirit;"—in other words, that it was their duty to adopt the spirit and not necessarily the letter of the existing

laws. In a letter to Joshua Coit, written in December, 1794, the Governor gives the following account of his "battle" with the Judges and its result:—

It appeared to me very clearly that the temporary legislature had no power to make laws, but merely to adopt any of the Acts of the original States that might be suited to the circumstances of the Territory. The Judges, Parsons and Varnum, were decidedly of a contrary opinion, and the point was battled, both verbally and in writing, for a considerable time. . . . Considering that they were both men of the law, my conclusion was that, how strong soever my conviction was, my construction must be erroneous, and I finally did give way, upon their consenting to use the word adopted instead of enacted. After the death of these gentlemen, and others being appointed, I endeavored to bring them to what I conceived to be the design of Congress; but I met with the same opinion, and an equal degree of obstinacy in and from them. . . . The concurrent sentiments of two sets of Judges, all of them men of the law, put an end to any further objections on my part, and though not convinced, I supposed that I must have been in error. From that time the style of our laws changed from adopted and published, to enacted and made.

In assuming the right to make needed alterations in the existing statutes adopted by them, it is evident that the Governor and Judges, if they exceeded, did not abuse their authority, for the Territorial Legislature, when it came into being several years later, ratified all their enactments except two which had been repealed, thus rendering a high tribute to the value of their work. Another question arose as to the construction of the phrase, "the Governor and Judges, or a majority of them." The Judges contended that the words, "a majority of them," applied to the Governor and Judges sitting as a legislative body, and that the assent of two judges or of the Governor and one judge, was necessary to pass any measure. The Governor, on the other hand, claimed an absolute veto, insisting that these words referred to the Judges alone, and that while a bill might be passed by the vote of the Governor and one judge, it could not be passed by the vote of the two Judges without his assent. The punctuation of the phrase supported the contention of the Judges, as did also the fact that the Ordinance gave no one in

express terms the right to veto the action of the Governor and Judges; but the Governor argued, "that though it was true the punctuation would favor the construction the Judges seemed inclined to put upon the phrase, he believed it was the true sense and that Congress intended the assent of the Governor should be necessary to all laws adopted during the temporary stage of government, as well as to all laws framed by the General Assembly after its organization." The matter was finally referred to Congress, which sustained St. Clair's construction, probably, not so much on the phraseology of the law, as to make the situation analogous to what it would be upon the election of a Territorial Legislature, when, by the terms of the Ordinance, the Governor would be given an absolute veto upon all the legislation of the Territory. The published correspondence between the Governor and Judges as to their respective powers under the Ordinance, shows at times considerable warmth, but their personal relations were always cordial, and, as the records show, they labored earnestly together in laying the foundations of civil government in the Territory.

On the 26th of July, the County of Washington was created by an order of the Governor, and embraced within its limits nearly all the eastern half of the present State of Ohio. On the 2d of September, the County officers having been duly appointed, the County Court was opened with a degree of pomp and ceremony quite unusual since in Western frontier courts. As described by the biographer of St. Clair, "the citizens, Governor St. Clair and other Territorial officers, and military from Fort Harmar, being assembled at the Point, a procession was formed, and, as became the occasion, Colonel Sproat, Sheriff, with drawn sword and wand of office led the march up a path that had been cut through the forest to the Hall in the northwest Blockhouse of Campus Martius, where the whole countermarched, and the Judges, Putnam and Tupper, took their seats on the high bench. Prayer was offered by Rev. Manasseh Cutler, a director of the Company then on a visit to the Colony, after which the Commissions of the Judges, Clerk and Sheriff were read, and the opening proclaimed in deep tones by Colonel Sproat, in these words: "O, yes, a Court is opened for the administration of even handed justice, to the poor and to the

rich, to the guilty and the innocent, without respect of persons, none to be punished without trial by their peers, and then in pursuance of the law and evidence in the case."

The following from General Parsons to his wife relates to affairs in Marietta and troubles with the Indians:—

MARIETTA, *July 20, 1788.*

MY DEAR.—I imagine your letters must have failed on the way, as I am sure you have written me more than twice since I left you, the last of which I have answered. At the same time I received one from Enoch and another from Lucia, and since that one from William. It is to gratify my own feelings in bringing my dear family often to mind and to assure you of my unalterable attachment, that I so frequently write you. We for the first time have a school house, used by the Rev. William Breck, who, I expect, will remain with us until Mr. Cutler arrives. The school teacher is also here, but few families have yet arrived. This institution will not open until the Fall, when we have reason to expect a considerable reinforcement of families. Many persons have already gone and others are going, to return in the Fall with their families, and numbers are now on the road and others hutted in Washington and Westmoreland Counties until houses are built for their accomodation. I shall continue in my hut until I know your intention of joining me in this country. Should you determine to make me so happy, I shall immediately set about accomodating you in a situation more beautiful than you ever before experienced. Our city's name, in honor of the Queen of France, is composed of her two Christian names—Marie Antoinette. The Governor is here. He appears pleased with the situation and the people equally pleased with him. This will be the seat of Government, the Governor having given us pretty clear intimations of his views on that hand.

The treaty is postponed; the stores had been sent up the River about eighty miles to the place where the treaty was to have been held, under the guard of twenty men. About that number of the banditti from the Chippeway tribe made a sudden attack on the guard, but retreated finding nothing to plunder. In this affray three men were killed and one wounded. The Indians had two killed and one wounded and were repulsed, since which six Indians of that nation were made prisoners and recently lodged in the provost at Fort Harmar and the stores all returned to the Fort. The Governor has sent a messenger to the Indian tribes remonstrating against this violation of faith and demanding immediate satisfaction, and I think

there is a prospect of this proving very much to our advantage, but it must necessarily create delay in settling the amount of damage that has been done by the Indians this season (except the attack on the guard) within three hundred miles of this settlement. Some has been done and more reported to have been done in Kentucky. In short, it is impossible to conjecture with any degree of certainty what part of the representations of Indian depredations ought to be believed. If you take two-thirds as utterly devoid of truth and believe one-half the rest, you will have a pretty clear idea by relying upon your faith. I also wait to know the issue of matters at the East. The holders and agents have ordered all shares (of the Ohio Company) forfeited which are not paid by the first of next June. My sons must see that business closed immediately and Enoch must bring a receipt in full for ninety-nine shares, including the shares of Mr. Browne and Platt. This being done will leave in my hands a sufficient number of shares without purchasing. They may, therefore, omit to make any purchases at present, as this will bring them much cheaper than to buy of those that hold them. If the persons named as purchasers have not paid, let them borrow the securities and not fail to pay in and send me the receipt as soon as possible. I wrote in my last that it would not be necessary for Enoch to come on soon, but the arrangements will be such that I fear he will lose his office if he does not come this Fall. If he should come, let him attend to my former letters. I do not write him because I do not know but what he is on the road.

With my most hearty wishes for your prospects and my love to our dear children and the family, I must close this and am

Yours affectionately,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

The Rev. Mr. Breck mentioned by Parsons has the credit of having, July 20, 1788, preached the first sermon in English, northwest of the Ohio. July 16, General Parsons wrote to Manasseh Cutler at Ipswich, Massachusetts, regarding the condition of affairs in the new settlement:—

MUSKINGUM, *16th July, 1788.*

DEAR SIR.—I received your kind letter of the 21st of April this morning, on the arrival of Mr. Rogers and others. We shall be happy to receive you in our settlement as soon as you can make it convenient; indeed it is necessary you should be here as early as possible. Some different arrangements in the surveys must take place, I believe, and it will be proper that as large a representation

of the Proprietors should be present when any material alterations of the former system are made.

The beauty of situation, fertility of soil, and goodness of climate are equal to our most sanguine expectations; industry and perseverance will soon place us in very easy circumstances. Our principal obstruction to settlement arises from unfounded reports of danger, fabricated and industriously spread to alarm the fears of the people. More than one hundred have halted in Westmoreland and Washington Counties, and several have returned home, occasioned by reports, in almost every instance, wholly void of truth.

We have suffered no insults from the Indians, but they are with us almost every week, and profess great friendship for the Yankees, who they distinguish from the settlers on the Virginia shore; yet they have no government but that of influence from advice of their chiefs. We cannot be sure no partial injuries will be attempted by the ungoverned part of the tribes; we have, therefore, hitherto kept ourselves in a state of defense, so that no attempt can be made but where the whole body of the inhabitants may be brought to repel the enemy within an hour. Our working parties are enjoined to take their arms into the field, and a small patrol is every day with them. This service is done in rotation, and will be continued as a cautionary measure, tho' I have little reason to suspect any attack will ever be made. The Indians, themselves, remark in their towns that we settle compactly, and not in the scattered manner in which the frontiers have been generally settled, and no attempt can be made without meeting the whole force in the settlement, as well as the soldiers of the garrison. If we continue to exercise a prudent caution, I believe we are in very little danger.

An unlucky event has retarded the treaty. A few days since, a small party of the Ottawa Indians attacked a guard at the Falls of the Muskingum (about 80 miles up the river) who were stationed to protect the provisions sent up for the treaty, in which affray we lost three men; two Indians were killed and one wounded, and they were repulsed. The Delawares however, came in immediately, and remain to protect the stores and treaty. The Governor, in consequence of this violation of faith, has ordered the stores down, and sent to demand satisfaction for the insult. This appears to me likely to protract the business, a very proper measure and such as will in its issue do us much good.

Whilst I am writing, I received your two other letters. I will endeavor to answer all your questions. They are important questions. I believe nobody will lose their nightcaps, if we behave in our set-

tlement as we ought to, and as I believe we shall. No magazine of provisions is yet made here by which people may be supplied in any considerable quantities, but they generally supply in the upper country, though I think it economy and in every point prudent such supply should be made, when I know it may so easily be done without loss to the Company. This and some other encouraging propositions I shall make on the 22 inst, to which time our meeting is adjourned.

When I came no cover was provided for any person. We have built our huts, and the blockhouses are now begun, one being partly raised this day (the 19th). The Company have ordered four houses to be built, under the care of the directors and in their disposal. One will doubtless be for the Governor, one for the Company's use, one for the public offices and the other for accomodating the instruction of the settlement. On the completion of these, you will doubtless be well accomodated. You are wanted—many things are necessary to be done. Rome was not built in a day. We have some difficulties to encounter which require a persevering mind. I wish you here. I think families determined to sacrifice a temporary convenience to great prospects, should hasten to this place. I am pleased with Mr. Rogers, but your wishes are in your own power. You are the appointing power and I never wish to make the mode of education, or the instructor under such mode, more in the power of a town-meeting than I wish government or the laws to be.

You are very much wanted. I wish you here.

I am &c.,

19th July.—Our city is called Mari-etta. SAML. H. PARSONS.

To Rev. Manasseh Cutler.

The Mr. Rogers spoken of by Parsons, had been sent out to the Colony as a teacher by Dr. Cutler. Before this letter had reached the Doctor at his home in Ipswich, Mass., he had commenced (July 21) his journey to Marietta, where he arrived on the 19th of August. His diary in which are recorded his observations and the incidents of his visit, furnishes a vivid picture of life in the Colony. His voyage down the Ohio was made in a species of galley propelled by oars, which carried forty-eight passengers, besides cattle and freight. The passengers divided themselves into five reliefs for rowing at night, but Cutler and General Tupper who was with him, excused themselves from working their passage. It happened on this voyage that the screw was applied for the first time to the propulsion of

vessels on western waters. Tupper had described this substitute for oars to Cutler, who was so much taken with the scheme that, as he writes, he immediately "constructed a machine in the form of a screw with short blades and placed it in the stern of a boat, which we turned with a crank. It succeeded admirably and I think it is a very useful invention." This is the same device used by David Bushnell to propel his torpedo boat, with which General Parsons in 1776 attempted to blow up the British man-of-war, "Asia." This invention Tupper had probably seen.

Upon their arrival in the Muskingum, as the diary reads, "We were very politely received by the Honorable Judges, General Putnam and our friends. General Putnam invited me to his lodgings, which is a marquee. I drank tea with General Parsons." The next day the Directors of the Ohio Company gave a dinner to the Governor and officers of the garrison, at the Great Hall in the Campus Martius. Having gone to the Fort with Secretary Sargent to pay his compliments to his Excellency, Dr. Cutler was invited by the Governor to remain and go over with him. The diary briefly describes the function, which evidently was conducted with all possible state. "We came over in the barge to the Hall with his Excellency, the ladies and the officers. Barge rowed by twelve oars; Sargent in the stern; the word 'Congress' painted on the blade of each oar; well disciplined in rowing. We landed up the Muskingum, opposite the Campus Martius; a handsome dinner with punch and wine; the Governor and ladies from the garrison very sociable; Miss Rowena Tupper and the two Mrs. Goodale, dined and fifty-five gentlemen; returned in the barge to the Point." Cutler was also present at the inauguration of the Court of Common Pleas, opened it with prayer and, after adjournment, dined with the Judges and Governor at Fort Harmar. "Genteel dinner; fine fruit; Mrs. Harmar a fine woman."

The Governor, pursuant to the instructions of Congress, had invited the Indians to a general conference at the Fort preliminary to making a treaty, and at this time they were just beginning to arrive. Cutler complains that when he came in at night, he found them very numerous about his quarters, "the squaws mostly drunk, the Indians sober." "We have had them to dine with us almost every day since I have been at the Point,

principally Delawares, Wyandots, Shawanese and Senecas." The usual menu seems to have been, venison, wild pigeons, squirrel-pies, catfish and such vegetables and wild fruits as were obtainable. In his explorations with Parsons and Putnam, he visits a large part of the tract occupied by the Colony. He is very much interested in the remains of the ancient earthworks, which he describes as including within their walls from twenty to forty acres, and as having gates and covered ways, and containing mounds, some conical, some oblong, ranging from nine to thirty feet in height, and estimates, from an examination of the growing trees and decaying stumps, that their age cannot be less than a thousand years. He is greatly impressed by the productiveness of the soil, the excellence of the gardens, the plentifulness of grapes and small fruits, and the abundance and variety of fish and game; and he notes with astonishment the size of the trees, some over forty feet in circumference, and the magnitude of the cornfields, in which one could "as soon be lost as in a cedar swamp in a cloudy day." Foggy nights and mornings, sudden and heavy rains by which he was often "doused" and several times "almost drowned," together with abounding mud, appear to have characterized his visit; but, as an offset, all the women seemed bright and charming. Miss Symmes, who was destined to become the wife of one President and the grandmother of another, was "a very well accomplished young lady;" Mrs. Harmar, the wife of the first General-in-Chief of the United States Army, was "a fine woman," and Mrs. Captain McCurdy was "very agreeable."

Francis Vigo, a dealer in peltries along the western waters from St. Louis to Pittsburgh, a Spaniard by birth, living at St. Louis, then a Spanish Province, happened up the River just at this time on a trading voyage to Pittsburgh. Dr. Cutler, pleased with Monsieur's "fine large boat, with keel and rudder and ten oars, cabin and awning; good accomodations," engaged passage with him up the river and, September 9, took leave of Marietta.

The following letter from the General to his wife, was written upon learning the death of her brother, Captain Elias Mather, the preceding August, at his home in Lyme, Connecticut:—

MARIETTA, *October 18th, 1788.*

Two days ago I received your kind letter, my dear Hetty, of the 30th of August, with one from William and another from Enoch, dated in September, after it had traveled to Petersburgh in Virginia and back again by mistaking Petersburgh for Pittsburg. Here I wish to inform you that I suppose my letters lodged at the War-Office are still there, as I have never received one through that channel; those covered to Mr. Baldwin have come on safely and in good season. My heart is grieved at the sorrowful tidings of your brother, but, my dear, this life is but a passage to a far more durable one; we are in the hands of a kind, a wise and all powerful God. Under his dispensations let us patiently submit, in a firm belief that he disposes all events to the best and greatest good of the creatures he has made. Let us rejoice in his goodness and resign ourselves to his government. I own I feel more my daily dependence on a Superintending Providence than I have before realized, and a resigned state of mind to His will and government, which I believe to be the greatest state of happiness we can enjoy in this world. For many years you have been my companion in the multiplied troubles which have fallen to my lot, but rest assured, my dear, that however much I may most ardently wish your company in my future walks of life, how much soever my happiness will be diminished by your absence, I will never compel your choice, not will I omit anything in my power to render you comfortable in the country of your choice. My duty and the interests of my children keep me here. If I were favored with one of my daughters, I could be as happy as your absence would permit. But this also shall be left to your choice.

Yours faithfully,

S. H. PARSONS.

Dr. William Samuel Johnson having been chosen to represent the State of Connecticut in the Senate of the United States, General Parsons writes him the following letter of congratulation:—

MARIETTA, *November 24, 1788.*

MY DEAR SIR.—I should do violence to my own feelings, my worthy friend, if I should suppress my congratulations on the honorable appointment lately conferred on you by the country which gave you birth. When I reflect that merit may sometimes rise triumphant over envy and persecution, and that the men who have pursued with malignant hatred to bonds and banishment, a character more honest and steadfast than themselves, are compelled to claim

their citizen in another State and heap upon him the testimonies of their esteem, I feel a degree of satisfaction not to be expressed. My personal regard to you has, you believe and I know, interested me in the vicissitudes of your fortune since our first acquaintance. If at any time I have done what might wound your feelings, dire necessity under my then situation must be my only excuse. The goodness of your heart has buried this transaction that a mention of it has never escaped your lips; at least, your kindness has never suffered you to upbraid me, and the interest you have taken in my prosperity, has convinced me that no latent seeds of dissatisfaction rest in your breast. That you may continue to possess the confidence of your country so justly placed, will ever be my most ardent wish, and that I may deserve the friendship you have long honored me with, will be my constant endeavor.

You know I am somewhat prone to enthusiasm, and therefore, a particular description of the beauties and excellency of our country will be subject to some suspicion coming from me, but to assure you that the beauty of situation, salubrity of air, luxuriance of soil and prospects of ease give me perfect satisfaction and answer my most sanguine expectations, will be pleasing information, yet many things are still to be done to render us all the benefits we hope to derive from this excellent country. The habits of an old world are in some degree to be corrected in forming a new one of the old materials. The different local prejudices are to be done away and a medium fallen upon which may reconcile all. This, so far as respects religious opinions, which have been as fruitful a source of ill neighborhood and persecuting dispositions as any in the world, I believe we have placed on a satisfactory ground. We compel no man to profess himself under the influence of any particular religion. We oblige every man to attend military duty at the door of the church every Sunday, and when military exercises are over, we attend the public worship of the Supreme Being. Those who do not choose to attend may withdraw, but custom, that wicked tyrant, generally makes a full assembly. We permit no one to disturb any person in his worship, and servile labor is forbidden on the Sabbath. Jews and Gentiles may worship in their own way; nor do we approve of any endeavors to establish one denomination of Christians over another. Roman Catholics, Episcopalians of every kind, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers &c. &c., are equally received, and their preachers congregate us in one assembly as they happen to come on. Regulations of government may create greater difficulties. We may adopt, but not make laws. This, if literally adhered to, will create

a code of laws as discordant in style and substance as can be conceived, but should the idea be that we may vary the form to suit our own circumstances, preserving the substance, we may do better. This we have hitherto practiced upon.

The constitution of the Country provides no way for the administration of government on the death or occasional absence of the Governor. Should this be left in this state? We had thought of publishing a law on this subject, but we cannot yet agree. Brother Varnum refuses his assent to vest this power in the Judges unless I agree to a clause expressly declaring that there is no priority between him and me (being appointed in one day) and that in conducting the Court and in every exercise of authority there is a rotation between him and me. This I shall never agree to. I suppose myself *primus inter pares,* and have no right to cede this priority to any man. Would it not be better for Congress to make some declaratory resolve on this matter to prevent difficulties?

Our Governor renders himself agreeable to every one except my brother (Varnum) whose view, perhaps, may not be limited to his present station. I am satisfied in my present appointment, but should a vacancy happen in the first office, I shall rely upon your opposing my claim to those of either of my brethren, and supporting me in opposition to them and most other candidates. Some I should not object to.

The Indian Treaty is yet in suspense. They refuse to come here and the Governor refuses to go to them. The issue is uncertain. I think with discretionary powers the Governor could settle all matters quietly, but confined, as I suppose he is, a war must be the issue, which, though it will probably terminate favorably, will be more expensive than a purchase of the lands as we want them. But in present circumstances, I don't see but that they must be driven away and dispersed, if they refuse to treat. The Connecticut lands are inferior to none in this country, and I think it would be much to their interest to pursue the example of Pennsylvania and give the Indians some small sum. Two or three thousand dollars would effectually remove all opposition on the part of the Indians and conciliate them to the Connecticut interest. If this be done, I can sell in the counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia on this side the mountains, so that a settlement would take place next year which will open the way to rapid sales both in and out of the State. If Connecticut should appoint Commissioners, I think General Richard Butler would best serve their interests. If they see fit to appoint me with him, I will do what I can to serve them. Perhaps they may

add Colonel Meigs of whom they have a good opinion. Commissioners in the Western country will save a great expense, besides their better acquaintance with the Indians and their concerns.

I am, my dear Sir, with the greatest esteem

Your obedt. servt.,

To Dr. William Samuel Johnson. SAML. H. PARSONS.

The following is from Parsons to his wife:—

MARIETTA, *December 14, 1788.*

MY DEAR.—Your very welcome letter by Mr. Miller, I received last night. I shall renew the idea of a building to accommodate you and the children. The peaches, asparagus and rosebuds shall be put into the ground to-morrow. As for asparagus, we have it in perfection. The apple seeds and apple trees I shall set out in my orchard this week. The Indians arrived at the treaty yesterday. All the nations that were expected are as follows:—Senecas, Delawares, Wyandots, some of the Chippewas, Ottawas, Pottawotomies and Sioux—three tribes have not arrived. The Mohawks, part of the Cayugas and Onondagas have refused to come in and have returned home. I believe all things will be amicably settled within a week or two.

I shall write Enoch if I have time, otherwise I shall enclose a statement of my account with the Treasury and a copy of the minutes. Unless my stay should be necessary on account of Judge Varnum's sickness, he being a confirmed consumptive, as is believed, I shall go up the River with the Governor when the treaty ends and shall come over the mountains and see some of you in Pennsylvania.

My most affectionate love constantly attends you and all our children. That you may be happy is the prayer of

Yours sincerely,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

The treaty referred to in Parsons' letter had been delayed for months by the failure of the Indians to attend. Several of the principal chiefs had arrived during Dr. Cutler's visit in September, but the main body—about two hundred—did not appear until December 13. On the 15th, the Council was opened. The Indians were found to be at odds amongst themselves. Days were spent in consultations with the Governor and powwows in their camps. At last, on the 29th, a Grand Council was held at which the old Wyandot Chief, Shandotto, presented with

great force the Indians' case and demanded that the Ohio be made the boundary line. The Governor refused this and insisted upon a confirmation of the treaties of Fort Stanwix, Fort McIntosh and Fort Finney. The Council reassembled January 6, when the Governor endeavored to show the Indians that they had forfeited their lands by siding with the British in the late war. It was not until the 9th that a conclusion was reached, when two treaties were made—one with the Six Nations confirming the treaty of Fort Stanwix, and the second with the Western Tribes ratifying the treaties of Forts McIntosh and Finney. On the 13th, the goods provided for the Indians were distributed and all left for home apparently well satisfied.

December 17, Governor St. Clair issued his proclamation appointing the twenty-fifth day of December, 1788, as a day of "solemn thanksgiving and praise." In the absence of a clergyman, the duty of preaching the customary sermon fell upon General Parsons. It is this sermon which Parsons so modestly refers to in his letter to Cutler, and which he sends to his wife, as he says, "to confirm her faith." His mention, as one of the principal subjects for thanksgiving, of "the peaceful conduct of our neighboring nations, who, from a state of savage ferocity, have hitherto quietly submitted to our possessing their country," is not so bad for a soldier. The following is the sermon—the first Thanksgiving Sermon preached in the Northwest Territory:—

Nature through all her works speaks the being of a God, and unassisted reason dictates the propriety of rendering Him a tribute of praise and thanksgiving for the daily instances of his care and Providence, to meet and recount His mercies, deprecate His judgements and to supplicate His future blessings. So forcibly has this truth been impressed upon all classes of men in every age, that perhaps a single instance is not to be found in all nations of the world, from the most refined stages of civil society to the most unenlightened tribes of savages, where a people have not assembled at stated times jointly to celebrate the praises of the Great Author of all their benefits; that in these acts of solemn and public worship (however obscured in fable, or enveloped in mystical jargon), their hearts might be warmed with unfeigned love to the Author of their being and all their blessings, in whom the heathen world acknowledge we live and move and have our being and who is so nigh unto

every one of us, that they may in obedience to his will promote a Spirit of mutual Benevolence, learn to commiserate each others frailties and throw a veil over their neighbors' faults.

And would it not be too great presumption for us to say, that the sincere exhibitions of gratitude to God, in whatever mode we demonstrate it, is not acceptable to Him who judges righteous judgement and cannot be misguided by false appearances.

But how much more happy is our case than that of those who by the glimmering light of a darkened understanding, faintly discern the duties they owe to the great first cause, and groping in the maze of perplexing errors, scarcely perceive the only rule of conduct to each other which renders life agreeable and happy. For to us a child is born; to us a son is given; His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

This everlasting Father, this all discerning Counsellor, has dispelled the mists which clouded our understandings, has clearly pointed out to us the road to felicity, and by His genial influences has sweetened all our walks in life, awaking to action those sentiments of universal Philanthropy which soften the heart, warm the affections and mutually endear us to one another; and, by subduing our vicious propensities, becomes emphatically the Prince of Peace; and how ought we to rejoice that the government is on his shoulders. To celebrate this event and to offer up our fervant and devout thanks for the many unmerited favors of the last year, to provoke one another to mutual love and charity, by reminding ourselves of the favor of our God, is the proper business of this day; and if our hearts are duly affected with the events this day is designed to commemorate, we shall be ready with pious men in former days to cry out in transports of almost enthusiastic joy, While I live I will praise the Lord, I will sing praises unto my God while I have a being; now suffer thy servant to depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, peace on earth and good will to all men.

Custom is sometimes a plea for assuming a control of our conduct. The habits of many people ought certainly to be complied with when no proper reason can be found for changing them. Call it national honor, a pride in excelling or by whatever name you please, a conformity to the manners of our country greatly tends to cement that friendship which sweetens all the enjoyments of life; while an affected endeavor unnecessarily to change them wounds the feelings of our neighbors and shows a versability of character not to be wished for. National pride and national vanity are distinct ideas and founded on very different principles. The former has many

branches, none more absurd than the pride of being a member of the only true church or professing the only true religion. 'Tis no matter whether a man professes the true religion whilst he believes it; 'tis the same to him, and this spirit casts out every other to eternal damnation. But the religion taught by Jesus Christ shows us we are not to pass sentence so lightly on one another; the God who is to judge us is a God of clemency as well as justice, and our Integrity, Candor and Zeal in serving Him will have their weight, if we do not take the nearest and best way. Yet if we lead a life of uniform virtue and holiness, we must be in a road which will bring us to the same end. The hope of salvation is grounded on the real Religion of a man and not on his Theology. He who examines and purifies his heart and makes the honor and service of his God the motive of his conduct, may be truly devout in all religions. Our contempt of other religions may in part arise from our ignorance of them. The Pagans have affirmed that the Christians worshipped an Ass with claws, but they made no scruple of murder and threatened to set the whole earth and the stars on fire. The Turks believe in the unity of the God-Head, yet are reproached by Christians as worshipping inanimate stars. The Arabs, persuaded of the infallibility of the Caliph, laugh at the Tartars for believing their Lama to be immortal. The inhabitants of Mount Batel believe every man to be a saint who before his death ate a roasted cuckoo. Alas, how short-sighted are the wisest of us—how little reason to set our opinions up as standards of truth to which all must subscribe or be damned. The blessed Author of our Religion has not taught us so.

Therefore, in compliance with the manner of our Country, I will name you the 103d Psalm, 2d verse, as the subject of our further meditations on this day. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. This Psalm contains an exhortation to praise the Lord, from arguments derived from benefits we receive from him. If we take a retrospective view of the state of man, from whatever cause it may be supposed to arise, we find his mind perplexed with labyrinths of difficulties from which no human help could relieve him. After the strictest search of human wisdom, few truths necessary to the perfection of our happiness were clearly understood, and from the prevalence of our ungoverned passions, those virtues were seldom practiced. The veil of darkness which shaded our understanding, gave us but a faint view of that straight and narrow path to unceasing felicity, in which few could walk, and which, though promising, with the mouth of unerring truth, the highest happiness to the weary traveller who perseveres to the end, yet is encumbered

with thorns and overrun with briers too difficult to be surmounted by persons governed by their passions and too much in love with sensual enjoyments. But the advent of the blessed Author of our religion has thrown off the veil and taught us by new lights to steer our course, and has published to all men a system of moral conduct far exceeding the most refined ideas of the more enlightened Heathen, and founded the basis of all our happiness on love to God and love to one another. A new law, saith He, I give to you, that you may love one another, and by this shall all men know you are my disciples, if you love one another. A new law does He say? No, 'tis the eternal law of the living God, but so far obscured as to be almost forgotten. A rule to love those who love us and hate those who hate us, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, had long been adopted in place of it. This eternal law is now again promulgated with new sanctions and further lights and therefore becomes as a new law.

It is He who takes our sins upon Himself if we comply with his commands, and His yoke is easy and His burden light. He speaks pardon and peace to our souls. His grace breaks the power of sin, removes the guilt and curse of sin and turns our love for it to an utter hatred of it. It is not for me to so limit the extent of His pardoning Grace and Mercy, but he has compassion on our infirmities, knows our wants and is always present at His Father's throne, our Advocate and Intercessor; and no one thing which he asks is refused Him, and not one of all which God hath given Him will be lost. What event can be more interesting to mankind, and what can more demand our songs of praise and most sincere and devout thanks. But, my friends, we are not left to praise God for this inestimable blessing alone—for this particular purpose has this day been set apart by most Christian Churches—but to recount His particular mercies, elevates our affections and by increasing in our minds a sense of His care and kindness more engages our love and assimilates us to the great Author of our benefits, who is Love. This field is too extensive for me to traverse. Were we to search for causes which have united us in one mind to leave our native land to seek the retreats of an uncultivated wilderness; if we reflect on the dangers and almost insurmountable difficulties which have attended our progress to our desired haven—enough to have discouraged the boldest adventurer had they been previously in view—; if we consider the peaceful conduct of our neighboring nations, who from a state of savage ferocity have hitherto quietly submitted to our possessing the country; if we advert to the state of almost universal health enjoyed

in our uncomfortable habitations and the bounties of Heaven with which we have been so plentifully supplied, in a country new and distant from settlements from which we expected to derive our subsistence, we must join in declaring, hitherto hath the Lord helped us, it is His work and marvelous in our eyes.

With the holy Psalmist let us join in praising our God and let us not forget His benefits, for He forgiveth all our iniquities and healeth our diseases; He redeemeth our lives from destruction and crowneth us with His loving kindness and tender mercies; He satisfieth our mouths with good things, so that our youth is renewed like the Eagles; He executeth righteousness and judgement for all that are oppressed; He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. We might here profitably employ our minds contemplating the designs of Providence in establishing this settlement in this distant land, in uniting our minds in so much harmony, in bringing together a body of people free from those perplexing dissensions which too much injure the cause of religion, and so far discerning the difference between true virtue and the essentials of vital religion and the forms of godliness without its power and influence, as to unite us in the pursuit of the former and incline us to disregard the latter.

But too much of your time has already been taken up to suffer me to obtrude on your patience the consideration of so diffuse a subject. I shall, therefore, only add that no measures can possibly be effectual to secure the happiness of this people if we remember not the Lord our God. The interests of Christ's kingdom in the world ought always to lie near the heart of a people whose interests have been so near to him. In the honest cultivation of true virtue and a promotion of vital religion we must seek our establishment, and the leading events of the present time should be told to our children, that generations after us may know that they are not of their own procuring, but bought with a price, and may in after ages be induced to join their devout ancestors in praising God in His sanctuary, in the firmament of His power, in His mighty acts in His excellent greatness—to praise Him with the sound of the trumpet and harp, to praise Him with timbrel and dance, with stringed instruments and organs. O let everything which hath breath praise the Lord, praise ye the Lord. Amen.

The By-Laws of the Ohio Company, unfortunately, did not provide for the sale of lands to settlers not stockholders in the Company, and it was with deep chagrin that the directors saw,

as Putnam estimated, upwards of seven thousand immigrants floating down the river to the Kentucky settlements, since the previous April, who would probably have staid on the Muskingum, could lands have been obtained. To correct this condition of affairs, a meeting of the directors was called for December, of whose action in the premises General Parsons advises Dr. Cutler in the following letter:—

MARIETTA, *Dec. 11, 1788.*

DEAR SIR.—I cannot longer neglect to inform you of the occurrences which have taken place here since you left us. The surveys of the 8 acre, 3 acre and city lots being completed, and the expectation of a treaty still continuing, all further surveys were suspended until about five weeks ago, when we all concurred in an order to extend four of our town lines to the 11th Range; and, Judge Varnum dissenting, two of the directors extended this order to the 12th, being twenty-four miles west, and to survey the meanders of the Ohio as far as to meet the cross lines in their south direction. The meanders of the river, and the first and second lines to the 12th Range are completed; the 3d and 4th, on a treaty being rendered certain and soon to commence, are, at the desire of the Governor, suspended for the present. The line commencing six miles on the 7th Range appears nearly to terminate the River Hills, and after passing about four miles west of the Muskingum, exhibits an excellent campaign country, very fertile and well watered. The other line passes over the River Hills through a broken country, interspersed with good lands and rich bottoms, but not of so great present use as the lands further north. In this line is found excellent iron ore—being burned and pulverized nearly seven-eighths is attracted by the magnet. It appears to be in great plenty. The treaty has just commenced, and upon the close we will pursue our surveys.

The time of the meeting of the Proprietors having arrived, a number sufficient to proceed did not appear; an adjournment took place, at which time 140 shares only appeared personally, and by special authority, Col. Crary not having then arrived. We then proceeded to take the opinion of the Proprietors present on the subject of granting lands to settlers, and altering the former mode of dividing our lands agreed upon by the agents at Boston. They (five shares only dissenting) gave it as their opinion that it was a matter well within the authority of the general agents, and requested them to take up the matter and to grant lands to settlers, not exceeding one hundred acres out of each share, and to divide the common

estate in such manner as would be most conducive to the common interest without respect to former votes. The agents have taken up the subject, 957 shares being represented, and Col. Crary being Chairman, voted (214 shares represented by Col. Crary excepted), unanimously to make grants of lands to encourage settlement, not exceeding one hundred acres to each share in the funds, and appointed a committee to reconnoiter the country and affix the proper places for that purpose, repealed the votes ordering the mode of division, and directed the committee to examine where are the proper places to divide farms to the Proprietors. You see we have decided the main point that we will give. I believe I ought to say we were unanimous on this question, for although Col. Crary would not vote for it, he publicly declared that he was fully in opinion with us on the general question. Judge Varnum appears the only dissatisfied person, but he is now so far advanced in the stages of a confirmed consumption that nothing ought to be remembered against him. I think it more probable he will die within a month than that he will ever recover. He intends setting out for New Orleans in a few days as the only remaining expedient for his recovery.

The settlers here appear highly satisfied with the measures we have taken, and very many will go out to those lands. As they must be settled in the spring or early next summer, it will be necessary for as many as wish to receive the donations to be out as soon as possible. We have had an addition of about one hundred within two weeks, and more are expected. We are constantly putting up buildings, but arrivals are faster than we can provide convenient covering. Between forty and fifty houses are so far done as to receive families, and ten more are in building, about one-half of which I expect will be able to receive families next week.

We still continue our Sabbath exercises, and last Monday we had the first Ball in our country, at which were present fifteen ladies as well accomplished in the manners of polite circles as any I have seen in the old states. I mention this to show the progress of society in this distant country. I believe we shall vie with, if not excel, the old states in every accomplishment necessary to render life happy. My wife has beat a parley and submitted a prisoner of war; she agrees to send one of our daughters next summer, and with the family to remove when I can make it convenient. This, you know, must give me great satisfaction. I think, Sir, your return here is not only necessary, but that you will be received with great cordiality by all our citizens. I am convinced Judge Varnum will never return; when all animosity will cease.

We continue to enjoy health and peace, and I have reason to hope all matters will be settled with the Indians. They continue to say they have no objection to this settlement, and that we are much more acceptable to them than any settlers with whom they have been before acquainted. If you intend the vote to close all payments in June shall be extended to a further time, you must be here, or at least bring Putnam and Sargent to support it.

The weather continues very fine. I finished sowing my grain this day. No snow.

I am, with great esteem and respect

Yr. ob't serv't.,

SAM. H. PARSONS.

23d Jan'y., 1789.—My letter not having met the expected conveyance, Mr. Oliver having altered his mind, I can now inform you that the treaty ended the 17th to the satisfaction of all concerned, and we still continue in peace and have a prospect of remaining so. Judge Varnum left this world, in which he was very unhappy, the 10th inst., for a better I hope where he will enjoy a tranquility to which he was a stranger here. He was buried the 14th with great decency, not less than two hundred men attended in the procession; the Masons, Cincinnati, civil officers, and those of the militia, formed part of the procession.

We chose another director the 19th, when the choice fell on Griffen Greene, Esq., from Rhode Island, in exclusion of Col. Crary. Votes for Mr. Greene, 566; for Col. Crary, 124. Mr. Greene has made himself very agreeable to us since he has been here; appears much of the gentleman and a person of great candor. Br. Crary is much mortified, and is about protesting against the choice; I was the only person voting for him, but I own I am well pleased with Mr. Greene. Our animosities have subsided and all appear friendly.

We have ordered a division to the Proprietors of 160 acres to each right, to be drawn the third Tuesday of March, within the settling rights. We have voted to give 200 settling rights to non-proprietors before the first of October, and those Proprietors who by that time will agree to settle their own rights by themselves or others, shall have the right to do so—if any more vacant rights at that time, they shall also be given to settlers. The duties are five years residence on the donation lands, within that time to build a house at least 24 by 18 feet, a stone or brick chimney, a cellar, and to clear twenty acres within three years, to set out fifty apple trees and twenty peach trees, and obey all militia laws.

I beg you will come on as soon as possible; we all want you, I am sure you will be welcome, I can preach no longer for you. Deacon Story does very well, but on the public Thanksgiving I was obliged for the first time to preach, much against my will, from Psalm 103, v. 2, and such a piece of work I believe you never heard; I am sure I never did. To confirm my wife in her faith I have sent it to her for perusal.

Y'r friend,

To Rev. Manasseh Cutler. S. H. P.

The settlement of Ohio was regarded, both in Europe and in this Country, as an event of national importance. Although the provisional treaties with Great Britain had definitely settled that the three Powers would relinquish to the United States all claim to the territory between the Ohio, the Mississippi and the great Lakes, neither England, nor France, notwithstanding she had helped us gain our Independence, nor Spain, had made the concession willingly, it being their policy to limit and dwarf, rather than encourage the growth of the young Republic, whose power in the future, if permitted to expand, they could even then discern. There was always a possibility, therefore, in the event of a foreign war, of a hostile occupation of this, the weak spot in the Confederacy, so long as it remained a savage wilderness. But when the men who had fought for and won our Independence, proceeded to possess themselves of the western country, attention everywhere was attracted to the movement, and it became apparent, as General Putnam writes to Washington, "that the faithful subjects of these United States will soon become so established on the waters of the Ohio and of the Lakes, as to banish forever the idea of our Western Territory again falling under the dominion of any European Power."

Of the character of the immigration to Ohio, Washington writing June 1788, says:—"No colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum. Information, property, strength, will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally, and there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community." A few months before he had written to Lafayette:—"A spirit of immigration to the

western country is very predominant. Congress has sold in the year past a pretty large quantity of lands on the Ohio for public securities, and thereby diminished the public debt considerably. Many of your military acquaintances, such as Generals Parsons, Varnum and Putnam, Colonels Tupper, Sproat and Sherman, with many more, propose settling there. From such beginnings much may be expected."

The matter of settling the unoccupied territories of the United States through grants of wild lands to the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary War, was much discussed in the Army as early as 1779, and General Parsons, in February 1780, proposed to Governor Clinton that the same plan be adopted for settling the western part of New York. June 16, 1783, two hundred and eighty-eight officers of the Continental Army signed a petition to Congress asking that the Indian title be extinguished to what is now the eastern half of Ohio, and that grants of land in this tract be made to the officers and soldiers of the American Army, as provided by the resolutions of Sept. 20, 1776 and by subsequent resolutions, and that further grants be made in exchange for public securities to such of them as should become actual settlers, with reference to such tract being in time admitted as one of the States of the Union. This petition was transmitted to Congress through General Washington, accompanied by strong letters from him and from Rufus Putnam, but Congress failed to act upon it and nothing was accomplished until the formation of the Ohio Company.

In the new project, General Parsons seems to have been recognized as an important factor, being the first named director and the agent selected to present to Congress the application for the passage of an Ordinance to sell lands in Ohio to the Company. General Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler were associated with him as directors. The eminent and trusted men who became stockholders in the Company, inspired great confidence in the management and contributed greatly to the success of the undertaking. Among them were such men as Governors James Bowdoin, Caleb Strong and Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts; Governor William Greene of Rhode Island; Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut; Samuel Dexter, United States Senator from Massachusetts and Secretary of the Treasury; Uriah

Tracy, Senator from Connecticut; Ebenezer Hazzard, Postmaster General under the Continental Congress; Brockholst Livingston, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court; Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury; Henry Knox, the first Secretary of War; President Joseph Willard, of Harvard College. Under such auspices the Company could not fail of success.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CONNECTICUT RESERVE. PARSONS APPOINTED TO SURVEY IT. FORMS SYNDICATE TO BUY LANDS IN. AT PHILADELPHIA FOR THE OHIO COMPANY. RETURNING, VISITS GEN. GATES. CHIEF JUSTICE ELLSWORTH. THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATED AT MARIETTA. APPOINTED TO TREAT WITH THE INDIANS ON THE RESERVE. GOES TO LAKE ERIE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEYS. RETURNING, IS DROWNED IN GREAT BEAVER CREEK. BODY FOUND AND BURIED; AFTERWARDS REMOVED TO NEW BRIGHTON. LETTERS FROM GEN. BUTLER AND LIEUT. MCDOWELL. PARSONS' FAMILY. HIS CAREER AND CHARACTER.

1789—1790

THE boundaries of Connecticut, as defined in the Charter of 1662, included all the territory between the forty-first and forty-second parallels from Narraganset Bay on the east, to the Pacific Ocean on the west, and embraced about one-fourth of the present State of Ohio, and two-fifths of the territory subsequently granted to William Penn and named by him Pennsylvania. The settlement of the Wyoming Valley by Connecticut people and their claim of jurisdiction under the Connecticut Charter, had raised the question of title prior to the Revolutionary War, but, upon the commencement of hostilities, the matter, at the request of Congress, was left in abeyance until, in November, 1781, the inhabitants, impatient at the delay, petitioned Congress for an adjudication of the conflicting claims of the two States by a Board of Commissioners to be selected as provided by the Articles of Confederation. Connecticut was represented in this proceeding by Eliphalet Dyer and William Samuel Johnson, who, in 1773 and 1774, had been appointed with General Parsons, Governor Matthew Griswold, Roger Sherman and others, a Committee to prepare a case for the submission of this controversy to the Courts of Great Britain. The Commissioners convened their Court at Trenton, New Jersey, November 12, 1782,

and, after a session of forty-one days, found unanimously "that Connecticut had no right to the lands in question, and that the jurisdiction and preëmption of all the territory lying within the Charter of Pennsylvania, and now claimed by the State of Connecticut, do of right belong to the State of Pennsylvania." The State, however, subsequently confirmed to the Wyoming settlers the titles to their lands. This decision, if not good law, was undoubtedly good policy, and in the interest of the peace and stability of the Union. But Connecticut's claim under its Charter to lands west of Pennsylvania, rested on a different and more solid basis, its right to these lands not being disputed by any other State, and having been in no wise affected by the treaty of 1783. Accordingly, when in 1786 she ceded to Congress her western territorial claims, she rightly and very properly recouped herself for the loss of her lands in Pennsylvania, by reserving a tract in Ohio of about three and one-half millions of acres, bounded on the south by the forty-first parallel, and extending along the southern shore of Lake Erie from the west line of Pennsylvania on the east to the bay of Sandusky on the west, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles. This tract was and still is known as the Connecticut or Western Reserve.

In October, 1786, the General Assembly resolved to sell that part of the Reserve east of the Cuyahoga River, and appointed Benjamin Huntington and John Chester a Committee for the purpose. The resolution provided for the division of the tract into townships six English miles square, to be laid out in ranges running from the forty-first degree of latitude northerly to Lake Erie, parallel to the west line of Pennsylvania, and to be numbered from this line westerly. The low price—three shillings per acre—at which these lands were offered attracted attention, particularly as obligations of the State were receivable in payment, and led General Parsons to organize a syndicate to purchase several townships. Having learned much of the country from an old army friend, Captain Jonathan Heart (then commanding a company at Venango), who had explored the whole tract east of the Cuyahoga, he located 24,000 acres at the Salt Springs on the Meander, about two miles south of Niles in Mahoning County, and obtained from the Committee having charge of the sale, authority "to survey and lay out the two

most southerly townships in the third Range of townships from the Pennsylvania line, which included the Salt Springs tract." He is said also to have located a quarter township on the present site of Cleveland.

The agreement between Parsons and the Syndicate provided that each member should pay to Parsons the amount of his subscription in the Treasury notes receivable for these lands, and that Parsons, whenever a sum sufficient had been paid in, should locate and purchase a township and cause the same to be surveyed and properly marked, and convey to each subscriber an undivided interest therein proportioned to his subscription, except in 4,000 acres to be reserved by Parsons in compensation for his services as promoter and manager, to be laid out in any part of the township and in one or two parcels as he may elect, such parcels to be rectangular in form, their length not to exceed twice their width.

General Parsons having been appointed Surveyor of the lands in the Reserve lying east of the Cuyahoga, the Committee in charge issued to him the following instructions, bearing date October 30th, 1787:—

To the Hon. Major General Holden Parsons, Esq.:

SIR.—You being appointed Surveyor of lands west of Pennsylvania belonging to the State of Connecticut, and which are ordered by the General Assembly of said State to be sold; You are hereby authorized and desired to enter on that business as early as possible by yourself or some trusty and skillful person in the art of surveying and such other assistance, attendance and preparation as you shall find necessary. You are first and without loss of time to make and perfect a survey and chart of said lands in the following manner, viz:—Beginning at the latitude of forty-one degrees north and in the line of the west side of Pennsylvania, and from thence measure northerly in said line of Pennsylvania, setting up marks or monuments at the end of every six English miles until you come to Lake Erie, and thence westerly by the Lake as it runs and observing the variation of the compass so as to lay down the Lake on your chart as it truly is, and also setting up monuments by the Lake at the end of every six English miles due west from Pennsylvania where the lines between the general tiers of townships will come to the Lake, until you come to the River Cuyahoga where it falls into Lake Erie, and from thence by the Indian line up to the head of said River,

and from thence by the line of the Indian's land until you come to the latitude of forty-one degrees north, setting up marks or monuments where the lines between the townships in each range will come to said Indian line, so that due east and west lines drawn from the monuments first mentioned to be set up every six miles in the line of Pennsylvania to their corresponding monuments in said Indian line, may divide between the townships in the manner directed by the General Assembly, observing in all your mensurations to make remarks and observations of mountains, rivers, brooks, mines, timber, stone, quality of lands and other natural appurtenances thereof, and make and transmit to the Committee a chart of the said lands from the latitude of forty-one degree north, and within the boundaries aforesaid, with your remarks thereon, with all possible dispatch, and likewise give intelligence to the Committee by every conveyance of your progress and success in the business aforesaid, until the whole is accomplished; and after completing your chart as above mentioned, you will proceed to lay out the townships in the manner directed by the General Assembly, and set up monuments at the corners of those towns, beginning the ranges at Pennsylvania and running the lines between those ranges at six English miles distance from each other and parallel to the west side of Pennsylvania, until you have laid six tiers, and more, if you find it convenient to promote the sale of those lands, and running your east and west lines in such manner as to make each township six miles square, according to the order of the General Assembly, and report your doings with the expenses thereof, to said Committee.

Dated at New Haven the 30th day of October, 1787.

BENJ. HUNTINGTON,
JOHN CHESTER,
Committee.

December 12, 1787, General Parsons paid to the Committee in behalf of his syndicate, twenty-seven hundred and thirty-six pounds, to wit:—three hundred and twenty-six pounds, seventeen shillings and eleven pence in bills of credit emitted in 1780; twenty-two hundred and sixteen pounds, seventeen shillings and one pence in liquidated securities of this State as lawful money, and two hundred and ninety pounds, five shillings in two orders drawn by him on Colonel Eliphalet Dyer, receivable in State bills or securities of the description above mentioned," which entitled him to a patent for the tract of land lying in the third range of townships, described as follows:—

Beginning at the northeast corner of the first township in said range; thence running northerly in the west line of the second range to latitude 41°, 12′, north; thence west three miles; thence southerly parallel to the west line of Pennsylvania, two and one-half miles; thence west three miles to the west line of said third range; thence southerly, parallel to the said west line of Pennsylvania, to the north line of the first township in said third range; thence east to the first boundary.

Parsons received his patent, February 10, 1788. The 4000 acres reserved by him as compensation, is described as follows:—

Beginning at a place called the Salt Springs, near the Big Beaver Creek, so called, from which place a line is to be extended one mile east and also one mile west; and from said Springs a line is to be extended north until it comes so far north as the parallel of the fourth boundary mentioned in the patent of lands granted to me by the State of Connecticut, (bearing date of February 10, 1788) two miles and a half south of the north line of said patent; and from said Springs to extend so far south as that lines drawn at right angles to each other and passing through those points will include four thousand acres.

March 10, Parsons quit claimed to Colonel Dyer three hundred and forty acres of the 4000 acre tract, to be held by him "in common with the other proprietors." This deed is endorsed:—"Received, 14th of September, 1788 and recorded Lib. 1, folio 2. En. Parsons, Register, Washington Co."

General Parsons commenced the survey of the Connecticut lands soon after his arrival at Marietta, but fearing that, if continued, it would excite the jealousy of the Indians and interfere with the making of the proposed treaty, he suspended operations. Of this he advised Governor St. Clair who in reply wrote as follows:—

NORTHWEST TERRITORY OF THE UNITED STATES,
COUNTY OF WASHINGTON, *September 14, 1788.*

SIR.—In your letter to me of yesterday, you say, that having been employed by the State of Connecticut to procure a survey of lands which I understand to be within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Territory, after having commenced the survey you had discontinued

it from an apprehension the state of Indian affairs rendered a pursuit of the object improper at this time.

I am very well pleased, Sir, that the surveys have been discontinued, for, at this time, when it is certain that the minds of the Indians on the subject of lands are not very easy, and when great numbers of them are hourly expected at this place, in order, if possible, amicably to adjust every subject of controversy, the pursuing of them might be attended with very ill public consequences.

I do not certainly know, Sir, whether I am right in another opinion; neither have I now time to examine it, but it strikes me that the consent of Congress ought to be obtained, and Connecticut should have obtained that consent before any appropriation of lands is made within the Territory of the United States by any State. Certainly the Executive of the Territory should have notice.

As Congress, by accepting Connecticut's cession of her western territorial claims subject to the reservation of a part thereof for her own use, had thereby admitted the title of the State to the part reserved, its consent could hardly have been necessary to enable the State to make a legal disposition of its own lands. Moreover, Connecticut, in the Act of Cession, had not only retained its title to the tract reserved, but also its political jurisdiction over it, consequently the Reserve was not a part of the Northwest Territory of the United States and the Governor's authority did not, as he supposed, extend over it. However, to avoid all questions as to title and jurisdiction, Congress, by a Special Act for "quieting the title of persons claiming as grantees or purchasers under the State of Connecticut the tract commonly called the Western Reserve," authorized the issue of a patent to the State for their use and benefit, "provided it should within eight months renounce forever all claims of territory and jurisdiction westward of the east line of the State of New York, saving the claims of such grantees or purchasers." Connecticut having, May 30, 1800, executed through its Governor the required renunciation, a Patent was issued by the President in behalf of the United States, transferring to the State for the benefit and use of these claimants, all the title of the Government to the lands in the Reserve. The interest of Connecticut in this tract was finally disposed of by granting in May, 1792, five hundred thousand acres from the West end of the Reserve to New

London, Fairfield, Norwalk and other towns in compensation for property destroyed by the enemy during the Revolutionary War, and by selling, in 1795, the unsold remainder, estimated to be about thirty-two hundred thousand acres, to the Connecticut Land Company, a syndicate composed of about three hundred and twenty of the wealthier citizens of the State. The proceeds of this sale, twelve hundred thousand dollars, were set apart as the nucleus of a school fund for the State.

In the latter part of January, 1789, General Parsons had occasion to visit Philadelphia on business of the Ohio Company. When half way to Wheeling, the boat on which he had taken passage up the Ohio became so impeded by floating ice, that it became necessary to abandon it and make the journey by land. With him was a young attorney from Marietta, Paul Fearing, afterwards prominent in the Colony, whom he had at the September term of the Court, admitted to practice in all the courts of the Territory. The mountains were crossed on horseback, but because of the condition of the roads and on account of an injury to his ankle caused by his horse falling upon it, it was not until the 15th of March that Parsons reached his destination. The next day after his arrival at Philadelphia, he wrote to his wife, then in Middletown, as follows:—

PHILADELPHIA, *March 16th, 1789.*

MY DEAR.—I arrived in this city yesterday after being more than seven weeks on my journey. I still continue very lame, but have some use of my foot. I much wish to see you. If you are able to endure the fatigue of a journey to this city, or to New Jersey, I shall see you; if not, I must deny myself the happiness.

Enoch must come immediately on receipt of this and bring all papers which in any way relate to the Ohio Company. Let him bring his books of record to send on. Send me McEwens' Meditations and Johnson's Dictionary. If Mabel will go with me, send her bed, furniture, clothing &c. to this city and let her come with you if she can; if not, her bedding &c. had better be sent at this time. I can be found at the Sign of the Conestoga Wagon, kept by Saml. Nicolas in Market street near Third street. I suppose this letter will reach you on Saturday and that Enoch will set out on Monday. I believe I shall meet him or you at Elizabethtown on Thursday. He will inquire for me at the different Stage Houses there, before he comes on here. I shall write to all our dear children before I

return. I expect the Governor here, when Enoch may be qualified for office and return, if necessary. Affectionately yours,

S. H. PARSONS.

The General's son, Enoch, joined him in Philadelphia, as requested in the letter to his mother. Their business finished, they commenced their long journey on horseback, riding leisurely across the Piedmont country and the Blue Ridge, along the Shenandoah and Potomac, and down the Youghiogheny to Pittsburgh, where they arrived the 3d of May. From Pittsburgh, Enoch, then a bright, observing boy of nineteen and not in the least doubting his knowledge of horseflesh, writes to his elder brother, William Walter, the "Midshipman Billy" of Revolutionary days:—

PITTSBURGH, *May 4th, 1789.*

DEAR BROTHER.—We have at last arrived at this place after riding and sailing about seven hundred miles; one hundred and eighty miles more down the Ohio will carry us to our desired haven. In this circuitous route we have ridden two hundred miles further than we should have done by coming the most direct route. Our horses have rather gained flesh on the journey, excepting my little white mare who tired at Winchester, where I exchanged her for another. I am agreeably disappointed in my mare, and would not receive so small a sum for her at this time by forty dollars as I would have done before I commenced my journey. I should not be so particular respecting our horses were it not for the many unfavorable prognostications as to my mare, and to show that people sometimes err in their judgement of the ability and inability of horses to perform a long journey.

No injury has been done to the settlement at Muskingum by the Indians; however, it is not certain (I think from the reports) that we shall remain undisturbed through the summer. A family or two were killed last week at Dunkards Creek, about twenty or thirty miles from this place, and Mr. Williams (the Indian interpreter) informs me that "five parties of Indians of different tribes were preparing to go to war, and would probably place themselves on the Ohio in order to capture the boats that are going down the river," and that Brandt, (Thayendanegea) is using his influence with the Indians against the settlement, and to dissuade them from attending to their agreement at the late treaty.

Yours &c.,

To William Walter Parsons. ENOCH PARSONS.

The next day the General wrote to his wife at Middletown, Connecticut:—

PITTSBURGH, *May 5, 1789.*

MY DEAR.—We arrived here the 3d instant, having moved slowly from Philadelphia through Virginia to this place. We are now awaiting passage down the River, which I hope to accomplish sometime to-day.

I hear the people at Marietta are now very quiet and all things go prosperously there. I am exceedingly pleased with the manly conduct of our dear son. His mind seems stored with a good share of knowledge; his manners are easy and graceful and he is universally respected by the gentlemen into whose company he has fallen. I hope to find great satisfaction in his company. If he thinks best, he shall return to you this summer with Mr. Woodbridge, and I hope he will be able to make it your choice to unite the family in this country. Your comfort and happiness is my earnest desire and nothing gives me so much concern as a fear you are otherwise. I hoped to have seen you once more, but I must submit to my disappointment. I can never be happy without you. Next to your company, my greatest satisfaction will be to be sure of your welfare. I am still very lame and I believe I shall continue to be.

My love to all our dear children and believe me, my dear, your faithful and affectionate

SAML. H. PARSONS.

To his wife.

While in the Valley of Virginia, General Parsons took occasion to visit his old comrade in arms, General Horatio Gates, ever courteous and genial, who was then living upon his estate, "The Traveler's Rest," to which he had retired after his disastrous defeat at Camden. Upon his immigration to Virginia in 1772, he had purchased this estate, situated about ten miles west of Harper's Ferry, between the little villages of Kerneysville and Leetown, the latter the old home of General Charles Lee (died 1782), and built upon it an unpretentious house differing little from the other houses in the Valley, its only peculiarity being the three huge windows in the dining room, constructed expressly to accommodate three immense and unusually gorgeous damask curtains sent over to him by his friends in England to adorn his palace in the woods. In this "Hospitable Retirement," as

Parsons terms it in the following letter of acknowledgment, remote from other dwellings and away from the traveled road, Gates continued living a quiet and uneventful life until his removal to New York some years afterwards:—

MARIETTA, *June 6, 1789.*

DEAR SIR.—I should feel myself criminal if I neglected by so good an opportunity as the present, to convey to my very good friend and his amiable partner my most cordial wishes for their happiness and prosperity. The kind reception I met with at your hospitable Retirement revived the feelings of sincere friendship for you which were many years since deeply engraven on my heart, and which in all the vicissitudes of your fortune have remained unaltered. My situation in life has always placed me in a state of dependence, but has never yet compelled me to forsake my friends or join in calumny against them, an independence of sentiment I always had amidst the miseries attendant on a narrow fortune and the perplexing delight of a numerous family. That you love your friends and never forsake their interests for small occasions, I have very fully experienced. I have now only to regret that in decline of life when we so much want the consoling company of our tried friends, we are destined to be so far separated as scarcely to hope to see each other many times more. I cannot go east of the Mountains and you are too much at your ease to come to the West. I find our settlement at this place in as good a state as I had reason to expect. We have planted three villages at about fifteen miles distant in different directions; (Belpre, Waterford and Wolf Creek Mills) and they appear to be established so strongly as to defy any attempts of the Savages. We shall have planted this year more than 300 acres with Indian corn. Winter and summer wheat, rye, oats, flax and hemp are growing in considerable quantities, and we have more than ten thousand apple, pear, peach, cherry and plum trees set out, exclusive of our nurseries, which have an innumerable multitude of small trees. The month of April, 1788, the first settler arrived here, and till then never a tree had been cut on this very heavy timbered country. I think we have made good progress, at least in the article of fruit trees. We must for a season be watchful and constantly on our guard; this has hitherto given us security and I believe we shall enjoy peace when our neighbors are involved in war.

My son desires his dutiful respects to you and your lady. He is very much pleased with his visit to your hospitable Retirement and often mentions you with friendly reverence. If at any time you can

give me a line, I shall be very much obliged. Remember me cordially to your good lady and believe me ever

Your sincere friend and obedt. servt.,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

P. S.—Your friend, Mr. Graham, has never called upon me. I do not know the reason, except he may have supposed the ambition of a certain man to be a mark of real respectability. I thought it not proper to seek an opportunity to enlighten him, as he has neither brought me a letter or message from you.

To General Horatio Gates.

Oliver Ellsworth, third Chief Justice of the United States, to whom the following letter is addressed, was at this time one of the Senators in Congress from Connecticut, Doctor William Samuel Johnson being the other—both close friends of General Parsons. A strong Federalist, the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate and an able debater, John Adams regarded him as "the firmest pillar of Washington's Administration in that Body." He was generally regarded as one of the ablest men of his day in New England:—

MARIETTA, *May 20, 1789.*

Hon. Oliver Ellsworth,

DEAR SIR.—I have presumed to cover to you a letter to Governor St. Clair from the uncertainty of his being in New York. If he is there, I will thank you to seal and deliver it after seeing the contents. If not, I wish Dr. Johnson may see it and such other gentlemen as you think proper to communicate it to. To you, Sir, I can say with freedom whatever I think on those subjects. I am convinced further treaties with Indians without a force to convince them of the efficiency of our Government, will not avail generally. So far as the particular condition of States adjoining the Indians may by them distinguish those claims from the general assumption of territory, may have a beneficial influence as it respects those States and probably will have. The inhabitants of this country will expect, and have right to expect protection from the United States, and I have no doubt will receive it; and the settlement of the Ohio purchase is the only solid ground of union between the two parts of the United States. Our habits and manners and our ardent wishes are such as will never admit the idea of separation unless you on the east side compel it; and I am vain enough to believe the systematical mode of settlements and the habits we cherish and sentiments we

inculcate, will eventually give the tone to all the country in the West. Perhaps I am too sanguine, but I know we are persevering and we are not to be appalled by difficulties, but look forward to the reward and shall not easily relinquish our pursuit. We, therefore, ought to be attended to and fostered as a favorite child.

You will see by mine to the Governor, the imperfection of the present government here; it is very much felt. Cannot you think proper to amend it. If a Lieut. Governor was appointed, this part of the difficulty would be remedied; and should economy induce the old Connecticut practice of annexing the office to that of Chief Justice, two or three hundred dollars would be a compensation for twice or thrice the sum. However this may be, or if the Governor does not return, you know my feelings will be injured by being superceded by another with whom perhaps I cannot be as confidentially happy with as I am with the present Governor. I beg you would interest yourself and your friends in preventing any appointment to the vacancy caused by Judge Varnum's death which will destroy the peace of our settlement. Mr. Cutler, General Putnam and, I suspect, Mr. Gilman, will be candidates. I believe any of them would be acceptable, as would brother Judd, if he can be obtained, of which, however, I am in doubt.

My son designs to go to New Orleans. I would esteem it a particular favor if you will join Dr. Johnson and Colonel Wadsworth in procuring letters from Mr. Guardoqui (the Spanish Ambassador in New York at that time) and a passport for himself and property, and, if you can do it with propriety, that you would sign a general recommendation of him, that it may appear his connections and acquaintances are reputable and he deserves confidence and respect.

I am with great respect, your obedient servant,

To Hon. Oliver Ellsworth. SAML. H. PARSONS.

May 14, 1779, the General's son, Enoch, had been appointed by Governor St. Clair, "Register of Deeds for the County of Washington and Clerk of the Court of Probate." These offices he held until April, 1790, when, in consequence of his father's death, he resigned them and returned to his old home in Middletown, Connecticut. While in the Western Country, young Enoch kept a journal of his observations. As an example of the fertility of the soil and the rapidity of vegetable growth in the new settlement, he enters in his journal:—"June 7, 1789. Rode out with my father to his three acre lot which was sowed

with rye in December last. About twenty days ago it was four inches high. Ten days since when we visited it, it was three and a half feet high; and to-day we found it seven and a half feet in height." And again:—"June 13th. Measured a spear of flax growing on my city lot, and find that in six days it has grown seven inches. Mr. Converse informs me that about three weeks ago he planted corn which is at present four feet high."

The following is from Parsons to his wife, in Middletown, Connecticut:—

MARRIETTA, *July 2, 1789.*

MY DEAR.—It is only to convince you I have a constant remembrance of you that I now write, after having so lately sent one by Mr. Leach. Enoch often writes, which is a great relief to me and gives you all the information you wish. We are very well and intend next week to go down the River about one hundred and twenty miles to lay out some fresh settlements. If no misfortune befalls me, I shall return in about a month, when you will hear from me again the first opportunity.

The Indians continue at peace with the inhabitants here. The white people from Virginia have crossed over to this territory and have done some damage to the friendly Indians. I hope this will have no ill effects, but should practices of this sort be continued with impunity, it may be followed by serious consequences.

On my return I shall write to William, Lucia and the children. In the meantime remember me most affectionately to them and believe me, yours most affectionately,

SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 21st of July, Enoch wrote to his mother describing the manner in which the 13th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was celebrated at Marietta, and the ball which was given soon after:—

The 2d instant I wrote to you by Mr. McFarley, that we were making preparations to solemnize the 13th anniversary of the Independence of the United States. I shall now, having nothing else to write, give you the particulars of our proceedings on that day.

In the afternoon we assembled at the northwest block house, where a short oration was pronounced, after which the militia paraded, discharged fourteen cannons, fired their muskets fourteen times, performed various evolutions, etc and were dispersed. The officers of the Government, together with a few other gentlemen, then re-

paired to Fort Harmar where we partook of an excellent dinner, and with good wine and under the discharge of cannons, we drank the following toasts:

1. The United States.
2. The President of the United States.
3. The Senate and House of Representatives.
4. The Secretary of War.
5. His most Christian Majesty.
6. Perpetual union between France, Spain and America.
7. In memory of those heroes who fell in America in defense of the liberty of their country.
8. The Marquis de Lafayette.
9. The friendly powers of Europe.
10. The day.
11. Governor St. Clair and the Western Territory.
12. Agriculture, commerce and sciences.
13. Dr. Franklin.
14. The citizens of Marietta.

By this time our spirits were not a little exhilarated, however, the greatest order and decency was observed by every person throughout the day, which was closed by the beautiful illumination of Fort Harmar.

On Monday evening following, we had a splendid ball which was opened by a minuet walked by Mrs. Battle and Baron Tilas from Sweden, after which we had several country dances, and closed with a minuet by Mr. Le Luce, a native of this country, a Chief among the Wyandots and one of the leaders. Twenty-four ladies attended this ball and between sixty and seventy gentlemen.

Affectionately yours,

ENOCH PARSONS.

In July, a committee of the Ohio Company, consisting of General Parsons, Griffen Greene and General Tupper, went down the Ohio to examine the Company's lands along the River as far as the western bounds of its purchase. With them was Colonel Meigs, one of their surveyors, to take the meanders of the river. On the 25th, near the mouth of Old-town Creek, they met John Matthews and his assistants, who had been employed by the Superintendent of the Company to survey these lands, returning to the Muskingum, the Indians having stolen their horses and provisions a few days before. The committee requested them to go back and complete their unfinished work, and, to enable

them to do so, sent to Marietta for supplies. These were received on the 31st, and landed the next day at a place below the Big Kanawha, the committee's boat continuing on down the River. Matthews, upon his return, again encountered the Indians and many of his men were killed. He was fortunate enough to escape, and, making his way through the brush and briers along the river bank, found the committee's boat a few miles down the River, with Colonel Meigs, the committee having left for Marietta. Parsons, unable to endure the fatigue and exposure to which he was subjected on this expedition, while very ill and depressed, wrote as follows to his son Enoch at Marietta:—

August 4, 1789.

According to my present feelings, I think it most probable I shall have a fit of sickness. My age and constitution considered, it is likely, if I should be confined, it will end in my dissolution. It, therefore, becomes my duty to commend to your care your mother and the family, to whom you must become a father and protector.

The agency in the Company (for the purchase of the Salt Spring tract) you will take upon yourself, and, having settled with all the proprietors, the remainder will be in your hands to do with as you find necessary, consulting your mother on the subject. I shall, if I can, leave a deed of my lands at the Salt Springs to General Butler, which you will deliver to him on his executing to you and your youngest sister a deed of the whole. . . .

I shall again commend to your care my dear children and your mother. Preserve a life of strict honor and honesty in all your dealings and pursue a steady course of industry, and with all remember that the religion of the Scriptures is a serious truth. Console your mother and the children in all these afflictions and remember your father's injunctions.

Yours Affectionately,

To Enoch Parsons. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 18th of August, a few days after his return to Marietta, Parsons wrote to his wife at Middletown:—

MY DEAR.—Since Enoch left here, I have heard but once from home, for so I will call the place where you are. I returned a few days ago from an excursion of one hundred and twenty miles down the River to examine some lands with which I found myself per-

fectly satisfied, but the very great fatigue of traveling through the wilderness, lying in the boat and submitting myself to the wet and cold, was too great for me and I fell sick and was obliged to return. I am now recovered, with the exception of being very weak and an inflamation in my eye which gives me much pain, but I hope in a few days to be well.

The Governor not having written makes it uncertain whether I shall go to the Illinois. I hope it will not be bad at the time, which will prevent me meeting you over the mountains on your way to this country, where I shall rejoice to find you and make you happy. I hope the means left at your command will prevent your suffering. If the family were together, the expense would be much lessened. William must send me a copy of all the moneys due me from the Agency, together with the names of present proprietors.

With love to all our dear children and compliments to friends, I am, with unfeigned affection,

Yours faithfully,

To Mrs. Parsons. SAML. H. PARSONS.

On the 7th of August, Congress passed an Act amending the Ordinance of 1787, so that, in conformance with the methods of the Constitution, all Territorial officers should be nominated by the President and appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. On the 8th day of August, 1779, President Washington sent to the Senate the name of Arthur St. Clair, for Governor; of Winthrop Sargent, for Secretary, and of Samuel Holden Parsons, John Cleves Symmes and William Barton, for Judges, of the Northwest Territory, all of which nominations were duly confirmed.

In August, General Parsons wrote to Governor St. Clair, then in New York, respecting the affairs of the Territory, as follows:—

MARIETTA, *August 23, 1789.*

SIR.—We have long expected and most ardently wished your Excellency to return to your Government; but we are convinced your absence is necessary and the welfare of the Territory requires your continuance near Congress. I have only to express my desire that your absence may not long be delayed, and that everything necessary for the welfare of the Government may be accomplished before your return. I see in the journals of Congress a resolution for the government of this country; if it in any manner changes the former

system, I shall feel much obliged if your Excellency will favor me with the contents of the bill. On the 14th instant a party of our surveyors were attacked by the Indians about one hundred and twenty miles down the Ohio from this place; six soldiers were killed dead, and one of the chainmen was wounded, and is either killed or taken; he could not be found the next day nor has he since been heard of. I hope ere this time I have an agreeable colleague appointed, and that he will speedily arrive. I have been sick about three or four weeks, but have nearly recovered my health again.

The inhabitants in the settlement enjoy good health and the luxuriance of the vegetation promises a plentiful return for their labor; they have this year four hundred acres of corn and small grain, all of which bids fair to produce in abundance. One grist and saw mill will be completed soon, another by December.

Yours &c.,

To Governor St. Clair. SAML. H. PARSONS.

Parsons does not appear to have heard at this time of his reappointment as Chief Judge of the Territory. The following letter he received from his friend, General Richard Butler, who seems to have removed from Carlisle to Pittsburgh:—

PITTSBURGH, *September 14, 1789.*

MY FRIEND.—I received your favor of 23d of July. Am happy to hear your settlement is not disturbed by the Indians, that you are in health and that you intend us the pleasure of a visit this fall. As I have now got my little flock fixed within my reach, I hope your calls and visits will be more frequent. As to what the great folks of New York are about, I believe the Government will be useful both to you and us, and although there are some grumbling about high salaries, (and I believe with some justice) I hope much from the regularity and efficiency of it. The Governor and Government is established, I believe, on the old grounds, and a Land Office is expected to be opened for tracts of a certain size. The impost bill is in action and, I am told, operates easily; if so, some compensation for past service may be expected, as certificates will appreciate, but as yet they are low.

You desire me to forward the money you left in my hands, and sorry I am it is not in my power, as I have neither received a shilling from either States or United States, but I can have you furnished with anything at Captain O'Harra's that his store affords to amount of the sum. He has groceries and other matters which may be useful. This gives me more uneasiness than it can you.

I hear that you, Judge Symmes and one from Boston are the Judges under the new dispensation. Will an order on my friend Meigs answer your purpose for fourteen pounds, three shillings? If so, it will be at your service.

My good girls, my son and daughter, Molly, join in love to you. God bless you, my friend. As heretofore

Your obe'dt. servt.,
RICHARD BUTLER.

P. S.—I shall not survey any this fall.

To General Parsons.

The following letter is from Parsons to his wife:—

MARIETTA, *September 21st, 1789.*

MY DEAR.—Our son (Enoch) being happily recovered, will set out this day for New York, and although I have nothing to add to my last letter, yet I cannot suffer him to pass over the mountains without just telling you I am in the land of the living and in good health.

Nothing so much troubles me as concern for your welfare. I hope your spirits will not fail under any trials which may fall to your lot. I hope we shall see each other again, but this God only knows. Mr. Woodbridge's removal so suddenly, defeats my expectations of seeing you here next spring. The cause of his sudden return I do not know. My diploma of the Order of Cincinnatus was left at Mr. Hobby's. I beg you to send for it, and if Enoch goes home, send it to me by him. I hope to return to New England next fall, and to be able to remove you here then, but this must depend on circumstances. Having no letters from you or any other person in New England prevents my saying anything on business. I do not know what to write and can only express my ardent affection for you and our dear children. I am, my dear, faithfully yours,

S. H. PARSONS.

In January, 1789, the General Assembly of Connecticut appointed Governor Wolcott, General Parsons and James Davenport, Commissioners on the part of the State to treat with the Wyandots and other tribes for the purchase of the Indian title to the Connecticut lands in Ohio. The following is the resolution making the appointment, a copy of which in the handwriting of Mr. Davenport is found among the Parsons' papers, having, probably, been sent to the General for his information:—

At a General Assembly of the Governor and Company of the State of Connecticut, holden at New Haven by adjournment the first day of January, 1789:—

Whereas it appears to this Assembly that there is a prospect of a treaty sometime in the present winter or the next spring between some of the States and sundry tribes of Indians who occupy the territory reserved by this State in their cession to the United States, and it being expedient for this State to maintain their claim to the said territory and to take proper measures to extinguish the Indian title thereto, Therefore, Resolved by this Assembly, that the Hon. Oliver Wolcott, Samuel H. Parsons and James Davenport, Esquires, be and they are hereby, appointed Commissioners on the part of this State to attend the treaty aforesaid, and they are hereby directed to take measures to obtain information relative to the commencement of the expected treaty, and when ascertained of that particular, to proceed, with the advice of his Excellency, the Governor, to join said treaty; and in order to effectuate the object proposed, the Comptroller is hereby directed on application of any two of said Commissioners, with evidence of the advice and consent of the Governor, to draw an order on the Treasurer in favor of said Commissioners for the sum of three hundred pounds in specie, and the said Commissioners are hereby authorized to invest the said sum, or so much thereof as they shall judge proper, in such goods as are suitable for the Indians and the same to transport to the place where said treaty shall be held, and they are hereby authorized and empowered to improve said money and goods in the most advantageous manner in their power to purchase of the Indians occupying said territory, their said title to said lands, or any part thereof; and the said Commissioners are directed to report the progress of their negotiations to the General Assembly, or, in their recess, to the Governor and Council, and to pursue such further orders from the General Assembly, or from the Governor and Council as they may from time to time receive. And the Governor is hereby desired to commissionate the said Commissioners accordingly. And in case either of said Commissioners shall decline accepting said trust or shall be removed by death or otherwise the Governor is also authorized to appoint and commissionate some other person or persons to fill such vacancy or vacancies in the recess of the General Assembly.

Governor Wolcott had been Commissioner for Indian Affairs, and was peculiarly well fitted for this mission. He was a connection of Parsons, his sister, Ursula, having married Parsons'

uncle, Governor Matthew Griswold of Connecticut. James Davenport was a descendant of Rev. John Davenport, the founder of New Haven. He had served in the Commissary Department during the War, was Judge of the Common Pleas and member of Congress. President Dwight said of him:—"Few persons have been more, or more deservedly, esteemed than the Hon. James Davenport."

November 1, Parsons wrote from Pittsburg to his wife informing her of his plan, as follows:—

MY DEAR.—Two days ago, (Oct. 30th) I arrived at this place which Enoch had left the same day for Wheeling, to which place I have sent for him to come back, being totally in the dark respecting everything in the East. On Wednesday, (the 4th) I expect to set off for Lake Erie with Captain Heart to finish the survey of the Connecticut Lands; it will be a long and arduous tour, but I hope to be able to endure it. I have no time to add a word: the conveyance is now waiting. Yours affectionately,

S. H. PARSONS.

Enoch having left Marietta on the 21st of September and reached Pittsburgh on his return the 30th of October, would seem to have made his journey in a surprisingly short time. The news brought by him from the East, which the General was so anxious to receive before leaving for the Lake, may have related to the coming of his co-commissioners from Connecticut.

Hildreth, in his "Early Settlers of Ohio," says, that "in the fall of 1789 General Parsons visited the Connecticut Reserve with a view to preliminary arrangements for holding the proposed treaty with the Indians." We have no record of this visit, but, if the statement be correct, General Parsons when he arrived at Pittsburgh, October 30, must have been on his way back from the Reserve; for had he come up the River from Marietta, he must have met Enoch going down, he having left Pittsburgh for Wheeling the very day his father arrived. General Butler was at this time living in Pittsburgh. He had been employed by Parsons in surveying the Reserve and was interested with him in the Mahoning Salt Springs, holding a contract under Parsons' lease from the State of Connecticut, dated the 14th of the previous January, to manufacture salt. His business with Butler

and preparations for resuming the survey of the Reserve detained Parsons in Pittsburgh nearly a week.

General Parsons left Pittsburgh November 5, one day later than he had expected, with Captain Jonathan Heart of the Army, who was sent to explore the route by the Big Beaver, the Mahoning and Cuyahoga to Lake Erie, the route Parsons proposed to take. Upon his arrival at the Blockhouse on the Big Beaver, he wrote to his son, Enoch, who had returned to Marietta:—

BLOCK HOUSE ON BIG BEAVER, *November 7, 1789.*

MY DEAR SON.—I am this far on my way to the Lake. My health is more favorable to my view than for some days before I left Pitt, but I am not entirely free from my cold. However, if I find the pursuit will be attended with too great fatigue, I shall endeavor to return from the Springs. This day is too bad to travel; I shall therefore stay until morning. I was much disappointed in your not returning from Wheeling or sending me some message in answer to my letter. I have left my papers and about $400 with General Butler with orders to deliver to you if any misfortune befalls me. Perhaps it may be best for you to come to Pitt with Dr. Scott. Of this, however, you must judge as all things over the Mountains are unknown to me. I at present, apprehend no danger of consequence in my route, and, if good weather, I think I can be at Pittsburgh again by the first of December. From this to Salt Springs is about forty-five miles; from thence to Mahoning, twelve; to the Standing Stone on the Cuyahoga, eighteen; to the Lake, thirty; in the whole, about one hundred and five miles to the mouth of the Cuyahoga; from thence to the Pennsylvania line, about sixty; to Venango, about forty, where we shall take a boat to Pittsburgh. We expect to go about twenty miles a day, except when we run lines, when we can make only about half that distance.

Remember me to my friends and do not let anyone into the particulars of my route. Perhaps it may be best for me to go over the Mountains before I return to Marietta. Of this you can better judge.

Yours affectionately,

To Enoch Parsons, Marietta. S. H. PARSONS.

Enoch has noted on the original letter:—"Received at Marietta in November, 1789, being the last letter received by me from my much beloved father."

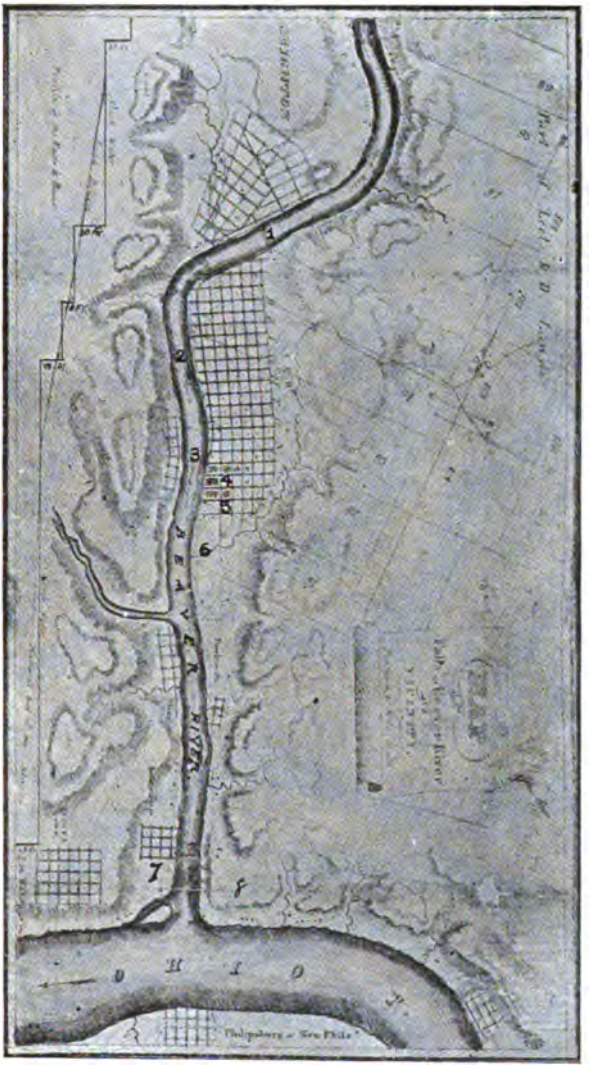
General Parsons had commenced the survey of that part of the

Reserve east of the Cuyahoga River in the summer of 1788, but discontinued it for fear of exciting the suspicions of the Indians. From the preceding letters he appears to have decided to finish the work at this time, and to be now on his way to Lake Erie for the purpose. He may also have wished to visit his lands at the Salt Springs near the Mahoning. The season chosen for continuing the survey was favorable for the purpose. The leaves had fallen and the woods were now comparatively open and penetrable by the sunlight, making extended vistas possible and greatly facilitating the surveyor's work. The country which Parsons and Heart were to traverse, was an unbroken wilderness with not even a military Post except the little Blockhouse from which the foregoing letter was written, built the year before two miles up the Beaver on the present site of New Brighton, the old Fort McIntosh, a mile below the mouth of the Beaver having been abandoned and demolished in 1788. The Blockhouse stood on a high bluff very near the river, which at that point was about two hundred yards wide. Above it were three dangerous falls or rapids—the lower falls about six hundred yards above and in full view of the Blockhouse; the middle falls about one mile above and the upper falls two and one-half miles. Indeed, the whole stream was a rapid—the bottom filled with boulders about which the swift current eddied, threatening destruction to any craft attempting to shoot the falls. At this time Lieut. Nathan McDowell was in command at the Blockhouse—a very careful, intelligent, considerate officer and a devoted friend of General Parsons. He resigned from the Army September 4, 1790.

Parsons and Heart, as appears from Parsons' letter of the 7th to his son, left the Blockhouse November 8th, their route being along the bridle path leading up the Big Beaver River. Finding the journey too fatiguing, or having learned of the arrival of the Commissioners from Connecticut, Parsons went no farther than the Salt Springs. Captain Heart, parting with him here, "followed the trail west to the Cuyahoga, thence to its mouth and down the Lake to Erie," arriving safely at Pittsburgh about the last of December. Having finished his business at the Springs, Parsons commenced his return journey, and, on the 17th, was descending the Big Beaver in a canoe. Before

leaving his camp that morning, he had sent forward his horses to the Blockhouse and directed his man to say to Lieut. McDowell that he would be with him at dinner; but the man was delayed by snow which had fallen during the night, and did not arrive until evening. Parsons had with him in the canoe a man with a broken leg whom he appears to have been assisting to reach the settlements where he could be properly cared for, and the canoe seems to have been taken as the most comfortable means of carriage. His humanity in this case proved to be at the expense of his own life. While running the rapids, his canoe was wrecked upon the rocks and both he and the man with him were drowned. The accident must have occurred about noon, for at that time broken pieces of a canoe and articles known to have belonged to Parsons were seen floating by the Blockhouse. Just where it happened is not known, but probably at the middle or upper falls, for the lower were in plain sight from the Blockhouse and the persons who saw the wreckage saw nothing of the disaster. Being a fine swimmer, it was thought that Parsons might have reached the shore had not a lameness, caused by his horse falling upon his ankle, impeded his movements in the water; but the river being very high at the time and the water chilled by the snow of the previous night, it is hardly possible that anyone heavily clad as he was, plunged suddenly into that swift and swirling current and dashed against the rocks, could have sustained himself more than a few minutes.

The news of Parsons' death is said to have been received by his son, Enoch, and the Connecticut Commissioners, the very day he was expected to join them. "Governor Wolcott, Mr. Davenport and Enoch, the young Register and Probate Clerk," so writes a granddaughter of the General, now more than ninety years of age, who has often heard from Enoch the distressing details of his father's death, "were waiting at Marietta for Parsons who was momentarily expected, dinner being delayed for him, when a messenger (sent probably by General Harmar or Lieut. McDowell) arrived with a note for one of the Commissioners. As he read it, his eyes inadvertently rested on our young uncle who felt it was fatal news, but commanded himself as best he could. After dinner Governor Wolcott invited Enoch to walk out with him, and when by themselves said:—'Mr. Par-



1. Upper Falls.
2. Middle Falls.
3. Lower Falls.
4. Blockhouse.
5. Burying-ground.
6. Blockhouse Run.
7. Bridgewater.
8. Rochester.

sons, I have sad news to communicate to you.' 'I know it, Sir,' he replied, 'my father is dead.' "

The waters of the Big Beaver Creek enter the Ohio at a right angle, causing an eddy along the north shore at and below the junction of the two streams, in which the drift from the Creek, deposited there through a long series of years, has built up a considerable stretch of low-lying land between the bluffs and the river. As is usually the case in such formations, shoal waters and thick-growing sedge must have characterized the shore. At the intersection of the right banks of the two streams, there was at the time of Parsons' death an island—since washed away—formed by a narrow channel cut diagonally from the creek to the river, some distance back from the shore. The main channel of the Beaver was on the left of the island.

Immediately upon learning of the accident, Lieut. McDowell made a careful and persistent search for Parsons' body, exploring every part of the creek from above the rapids to the Ohio, but because of the high water since the disaster, without success. The fear was that the body had been carried out into the Ohio; if so, there was little hope of its being found. The General's son, Enoch, remained the whole winter at Marietta anxiously awaiting the result of the search, hoping against hope. In April, despairing of the recovery of his father's remains, he resigned his offices in the Territory and returned to his old home in Middletown. A month later, on the 14th of May, William Wilson, an Indian trader, perhaps while hunting or fishing along the Ohio shore, or returning from a trading expedition down the river, accidentally discovered the body on the north shore, just below the mouth of Beaver Creek. It had not been carried down the Ohio as feared, but had remained in the Beaver the winter through undisturbed. Coming to the surface when the river water grew warm, it had drifted into the Ohio through either the narrow or the main channel of the Creek, and been carried by the eddy in the current northward to the low-lying, sedge-lined shore where it was found. Having made the body secure, Wilson, whose post was at the Blockhouse, reported his discovery to McDowell, who went back with him to view and identify the remains. The face was found to be badly disfigured and the body unrecognizable except by the clothing and the papers,

watch and other articles found on it. The papers and other articles, Lieut. McDowell took charge of. On the 16th, in the presence of and by the direction of Lieut. McDowell, Wilson buried the body near the place where it was found.

The wish of the General's family was that he should be buried at Pittsburgh. It was the nearest settlement and was accessible by the Ohio River. Marietta would seem to have been more appropriate for his last resting place, but Pittsburgh was two hundred miles nearer home. As early as the preceding December, Parsons' eldest son, William Walter, had written to Enoch at Marietta:—"Should the body of our deceased parent be found, let it be interred at Fort Pitt; of this don't fail and I will cause a monument to be erected. If he should have been found and buried, don't fail, my dear brother, to have him removed to Pittsburgh. I shall never forgive you if you do." To those unacquainted with the wishes of the family it may seem that Lieut. McDowell failed to show proper respect to the General's memory in leaving his remains in the wild exposed place where they were found, instead of removing them to the Blockhouse—only two miles distant by the creek—and burying them there with the military honors due to his rank. But McDowell was fully apprised of the wishes and plans of the family and did what he believed would best facilitate the expected early removal of the remains to Pittsburgh. Buried near the river, they could be more readily transferred to the large boats used on the Ohio, than if taken two miles up the swift and shallow Beaver and buried at the Blockhouse. Unfortunately, Enoch having returned to his home in Middletown and General Butler being on his way to New York, no one was at hand with authority to act, and the removal was delayed much longer than expected. Nothing was done about the matter during the summer after Butler returned to Pittsburgh, nor in the fall before he left for Philadelphia where he spent the winter, and, as he wrote Enoch from Philadelphia, nothing could be done before spring. If anything was ever done about the matter by General Butler, it must have been done in the following spring or summer (1791), for he, as well as Captain Heart, was killed, November fourth, at St. Clair's disasterous defeat. After Butler's death, the plan of removing the remains to Pittsburgh seeems to have been

abandoned, for it is certain they never were buried there. The belief is that at some time the body was exhumed and interred near the Blockhouse, but no evidence of the removal exists except the local traditions and the inscriptions on the General's monument in the old cemetery at Middletown, Connecticut, erected some time after the death of his wife in 1802. The inscription on the south side of the monument states that Parsons "was drowned in the Great Beaver Creek in the State of Ohio," and that "his body is interred on the south bank of Beaver Creek near its confluence with the Ohio River." On the east and west sides of the monument is inscribed a pedigree of the family which states that the General "was buried in New Brighton, Penn."

Beaver Creek, formed by the junction of the Shenango and Mahoning, is incorrectly described as "in the State of Ohio," whereas it is wholly in the State of Pennsylvania, the Mahoning branch only being in Ohio. The general course of the creek is southerly, and from the upper part of New Brighton to the Ohio River—about three miles—the course is due south. New Brighton is on the left bank and extends along the creek about one and a half miles. The Blockhouse is in the lower part of the town. It follows, therefore, if General Parsons "was buried in New Brighton," that "his body is" not "interred on the south bank of the Beaver Creek," but on the east bank. This error, if not due to imperfect acquaintance with the locality, may possibly be accounted for by the fact that between the upper part of the New Brighton and old Brighton (now Beaver Falls) directly north on the opposite shore, the Beaver runs for a short distance in a southwesterly direction, so that looking south from old Brighton, the east or left bank would appear to be the south or southerly bank of the creek, as it is in fact at that point. As Brighton was settled about the time the Parsons monument was erected, and ten or eleven years before New Brighton was laid out as a town, it is not improbable that the opposite bank of the creek may have been generally regarded and spoken of at that time as the south bank. The inscription, however, at best is indefinite and ambiguous, for if instead of substituting "east bank" for "south bank" in order to make the first inscription conform to the second, "west bank" be substituted, it would

point directly to the grave on the bank of the Ohio as the place where Parsons at that time lay buried, for the grave was near enough the creek to be described with almost as much accuracy as "on the west bank of the Beaver near its confluence with the Ohio," as "on the north bank of the Ohio just below the mouth of the Beaver."

From examination by an expert of the lettering of these inscriptions, it appears that the memorial to the General on the south side of the monument and to his wife on the north side were inscribed at the same time, which must have been after 1802, the year Mrs. Parsons died; and that the pedigrees on the east and west sides of the monument were inscribed long after the first memorial, perhaps thirty years or more, but prior to 1846, for the lettering of the note of Enoch's death that year differs in style from all the others. These pedigrees were undoubtedly the work of the General's grandson and namesake, Samuel Holden Parsons, a graduate of Yale and noted as an historian, antiquarian and genealogist, who had traveled extensively, written much and collected a great mass of material relating to his grandfather's life and services which he intended to publish, but, failing to do so, much of it, unfortunately, became scattered and lost. He had every opportunity to become acquainted with, and doubtless was accurately informed of, all the facts respecting the General's burial. New Brighton was incorporated as a borough in 1838, about the time these pedigrees were inscribed, and when he wrote on the monument that General Parsons "was buried in New Brighton, Penn.," the presumption is that he was familiar with the locality and intended to state definitely that the grave was within the borough limits; but no corroborating record exists and the local traditions are uncertain enough to be applicable to almost any place in the neighborhood. The probability however is, that at some time, but when or by whom is unknown, Parsons' remains were exhumed and re-interred in New Brighton. The exact location of the grave no one claims to know. Representatives of the family are said to have attempted many years ago to ascertain it with the intention of erecting a monument over the grave, but apparently without success, for this intention was never carried out. The Blockhouse was built in 1788 and abandoned about 1794,

during which period an opening in the forest four or five hundred feet south of the Blockhouse and upon the same bluff on which the Blockhouse stood, was used as a burying ground by the garrison. In this spot, if ever removed from the banks of the Ohio, the General must have been laid. A mound of earth, perhaps a pile of stones or a blaze on the nearest tree, was all that marked his lonely resting place. Since that time civilization has invaded the spot and a growing city has obliterated every vestige of the grave which time had left. The departing wilderness bequeathed to the new settlers nothing but a vague tradition that some general officer, a British officer it was thought, had many years ago miserably perished in the rapids of Beaver falls and been buried somewhere in the vicinity. It was not until fifty years later that the discovery among General Irvine's papers of the letter from General Butler which follows, made it certain to them that such an accident had happened, and that "the sufferer was not a British officer, but Major General Samuel Holden Parsons of Connecticut, a Revolutionary officer, Chief Judge of the Northwest Territory and one of the Commissioners who negotiated the treaty with the Indians at the mouth of the Miami." This letter and those from General Butler, Major Ebenezer Denny and Lieut. Nathan McDowell, which follow, contain all that is certainly known respecting the circumstances of General Parsons' death and the place of his burial:—

PITTSBURGH, *November 25, 1789.*

DEAR GENERAL.—I am sorry to inform you that I have every reason to fear our old friend, General Parsons, is no more. He left this place in company with Captain Heart, (who is sent to explore the communication by way of the Beaver to Cuyahoga and the Lake), on the 5th instant, in order to see the Salt Springs, and from thence he had returned and was coming down Beaver Creek in a canoe. On Tuesday, the 17th instant, he had sent a man with his horses from the place where he had encamped the night before, and directed him to tell Lieut. McDowell, who commanded the Block House below the falls of Beaver, that he, (General Parsons) would be there to dinner. A snow had fallen in the night which had retarded the progress of the man with the horses. At one place on the Beaver shore he saw where a canoe had landed, and a person got out to warm his feet by walking about, as he saw he had kicked against the trees

and his tracks to the canoe again. The man did not get down till evening, but about noon the canoe, broken in pieces, came by the Block House, and some articles known to belong to General Parsons were taken up, and others seen to pass. Lieut. McDowell had diligent search made for the body of the General, but made no discovery. There was one man with a broken leg in the canoe with the General, who was also lost.

Yours &c.,

To General William Irvine. RICHARD BUTLER.

Major, then Lieutenant, Denny, on his way up the Ohio to Pittsburgh, entered in his diary:—

Nov. 15th, 1789.—High water. Lay one mile above Holliday's Cove.

16th.—The River continued to rise. With hard work we made Dawson's, opposite the mouth of little Beaver, about eight o'clock.

17th.—As we turned up Beaver Creek to go to the Block-House, two miles up, where an officer and party is stationed, we met General Parsons' canoe, with some property, floating down. Found the old gentleman, in attempting to pass the Falls about five miles up, was cast out and drowned, with one man who accompanied him. Judge Parsons was esteemed a useful, enterprising citizen. He had an interest in Salt Spring Tract on the Mahoning, and anxious to prove the navigation of the Falls practicable, the experiment cost him his life.

18th.—Set out after breakfast and got as high as the lower end of Montour's Island.

19th.—Arrived in Pittsburgh about two o'clock P. M.

Upon his arrival, Major Denny reported to General Harmar, at Fort Harmar, Marietta:—

PITTSBURGH, *November 22, 1789.*

DEAR GENERAL.—We did not arrive here until the 19th, owing to bad oars, indifferent oarsmen and meeting two smart floods; however, we got safe and had the pleasure to find Major Wyllys, Captain Beatty, Captain Mercer, Lieutenant Peters, Ensign Sedam and Doctor Allison in town, all on their way to the regiment. They arrived two days before us. The Governor is expected in town tomorrow or next day. His boat is here waiting for him, and Mr. William St Clair, who came from Detroit to Fort Harmar last winter, accompanies him down the River. . . .

I am very sorry, indeed, that I have to inform you of the loss of one of the most serviceable members of the Western Territory, General Parsons. He left the old Moravian town up the Beaver early on the 7th, on board a canoe, accompanied only by one man. Sent his horses down by land. About one o'clock that day, as we entered the mouth of the Creek, we met the wreck of a canoe, with a good deal of her cargo drifting down, all separately. Part of the loading we took up. When we got to the Block-House, Mr. McDowell told us they had taken up a piece of the canoe, a bundle of skins, and had seen a pair of saddle-bags which were well known to be the Judge's; and the same evening the man arrived with the horses and told us he left the Judge early that morning about twenty-five miles up the Creek, that he intended to dine that day with Mr. McDowell at the Block-House, and the man knew the property which we took up to be part of what was in General Parsons' canoe, leaves no doubt of his being lost in attempting the Falls of the Beaver. The canoe was very much shattered and bottom uppermost, when we met her. Mr. McDowell has made search on both sides the Creek, above and below the Falls, but can make no further discovery, more than finding part of the canoe at the foot of a remarkably dangerous fall in the Creek, which strengthens the belief that there the old gentleman met his fate.

I shall be glad to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Harmar, while I remain &c.,

E. DENNY.

To General Harmar.

On the 25th, General Butler wrote to the General's son Enoch, at Marietta, and again December 26th:—

PITTSBURGH, *November 25, 1789.*

MY DEAR SIR.—It is with great regret that I feel myself under the distressing and disagreeable necessity of informing you of my fears on your worthy father's account. Lieut. McDowell informs me that on Tuesday, the 17th, in the evening, a man whom General Parsons had sent from their encampment with his horses that morning, arrived and informed him that the General had set out in a canoe with a single man whose leg was broken, and that he had directed him to tell Lieut. McDowell that he intended dining with him the same day. A snow that had fallen prevented the man getting in as soon as he expected, but that about mid-day, the canoe came past the Block House broken to pieces and some of the things were seen afloat. Lieut. McDowell had every possible search made to find General Parsons, but without effect. He renewed the search the

next day and more extensively, but was still unsuccessful. In truth, Sir, it is his opinion that both the General and the poor man with him, have ventured rather imprudently and in all probability have fallen victims to the rapidity and roughness of the rapids. I shall send a man or two to-morrow to make further search for the body of your worthy father, though I confess I have doubts of finding it, the waters have been so high since the disaster. If it is found, you may depend on every respect being paid should you not arrive in time, but I really fear he has been carried out into the Ohio; if so, there can be little hope of his being found. Your presence, I should suppose, will be immediately necessary, as he left his papers with me and desired me to give you both advice and assistance, which you can depend on as far as it is in my power.

I am &c.,

To Enoch Parsons, Marietta. RICHARD BUTLER.

PITTSBURGH, *December 26, 1789.*

DEAR SIR.—A few days since I received your letter from Lieut. McDowell, dated 28th November. The loss of your parent and my friend is great, and I regret in addition to that loss, there is no hope of recovering the body, although Lieut. McDowell assures me that every search has been made and is still continued. Should he be so fortunate as to recover it, you may depend on every attention in my power to the decency of the interment.

The matters left in my hands are safe and shall be untouched until you arrive, and as my worthy friend left it a charge on me to give you both advice and assistance in case of any misfortune happening to him, you may depend on anything in my power. I send by Dr. Allison the deed of sale for my proportion of the Salt Springs and land in. . . . to Col. Meigs to be recorded. This I request you to do as soon as possible and transmit the original to me. Captain Heart, I believe, can give you some information of matters relating to the country in which your interest now lies, that may be useful to you, which I have no doubt he will do.

As the season is like to come on hard, it may be inconvenient for you to come up, but nothing will be neglected in search for the body that could be done by you. I know of no business that can be attempted in that country till Spring and until some other arrangement of the troops takes place that might cover our people, so that you may judge of the propriety and utility of coming at your own time.

I am, Sir, your friend,

To Enoch Parsons at Marietta. RICHARD BUTLER.

The two following letters from McDowell relate to the articles recovered by him belonging to Parsons:—

BEAVER, *January 25, 1790.*

DEAR SIR.—I received your letter of December 31st last night, and embraced the first opportunity of complying with your request. By Mr. Loget's boat you will receive a small box, coat, hat and a tea-kettle. The hat is the only article that was last with him. When Captain Heart returned, he told me all his papers were in the box and he could not do without them. Upon which I suffered him to open it and take out a packet marked "Capt. Heart's papers," and two small pieces of parchment, which I suppose he informed you of. You are under no obligations to me for what I have done. The esteem which I had for your father was a sufficient inducement to do anything in my power. Believe me, I am truly sorry for the melancholy accident by which I lost one of my best friends.

I am with esteem your very humble servant,

N. MCDOWELL.

To Enoch Parsons, Marietta.

The following list is apparently part of a letter (now lost) from Lieut. McDowell to Enoch Parsons:—

Articles found with the remains of the late Judge Parsons, deceased, on the 14th of May, 1790.

A silver watch with a silver seal.
A small compass.
A pocketbook with several papers.
A silver shoe buckle and knee buckle.
A pair of mitts and gaiters.
A silk handkerchief.
An ink stand and pen knife.
A pair of spectacles.

Most of the above articles were too far gone to be saved. I have taken all the pains with the papers I possibly could.

N. MCDOWELL.

The three following letters from Butler to Enoch Parsons relate to the finding and disposition of the General's remains:—

NEW YORK, *June 11, 1790.*

DEAR SIR.—I hoped the pleasure of seeing you at this place to converse on and try to close some matters. In this I am disappointed for the present, as I am just setting out for Fort Pitt. I hope you

will not pass through without seeing Gen. Irvine and closing his business satisfactorily to him. I also wish you to succeed in some matters we talked over, as they may be of use to the parties. I can say no more on business at present. Let me now tell you that the body of your late worthy father and my friend, was found and his remains laid in the ground by William Wilson about the 16th of last month. This account was given me the very moment I mounted my horse to come this way, by Mr. David Duncan. When you come to Pitt, I hope we shall be able to have his remains moved to Pittsburgh. It will be a mitigation of his loss even to have that in the power of his friends.

Compliments to your mother and the family:

I am, dear Sir, your friend,

To Enoch Parsons. R. BUTLER.

PITTSBURGH, *August 2, 1790.*

DEAR SIR.—I received your favor 29th June three days since and note the contents, which shall do all in my power to comply with. I wish I had a copy of the surveys which your late father returned for reasons. I have not yet seen Mr. Duncan. He is busy with his harvest since he returned from Philadelphia, but have no doubt of his compliance with your order. Should the appointment you hint at take place, it may be of use to you as well as. . . . I wish you had the appointment I mentioned to you &c. I have seen Lieut. McDowell. He was at the depositing the remains of your worthy father and has sent under sealed covers to my care a bundle of papers which he dried carefully, a watch, one silver buckle and a few other trifling things. There was no money found with the body, but since it was found, there has two F. Crowns and some coppers been picked up. If I recollect right, Captain Heart told me there was money in the portmanteau or saddle-bags. The body was found just below the mouth of the Beaver where it is deposited. You shall hear from me again soon. Please present me respectfully to your mother and family, and be assured that

I am your friend,

To Enoch Parsons, Esq. RICHARD BUTLER.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *December 18, 1790.*

DEAR SIR.—On my arrival here I found your letter of the first of November, mentioning other letters and enclosures. These I have not seen, nor do I know who brought them. The request you make respecting the remains of my friend and your worthy parent should

have been complied with had your letter arrived at a season that was practicable. This cannot be done until Spring, previous to which I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you or hearing again, as I shall be here through the winter.

I am &c.,

To Enoch Parsons, Middletown. RICHARD BUTLER.

At the beginning of the War General Parsons was possessed of a considerable fortune and enjoyed an income from his profession sufficient for the support of his family, but between the depreciation of the Government Securities in which he invested the bulk of his property when he entered the Army, and the loss of his professional income which was not made good by his salary even as a General Officer, he came out of the War nearly impoverished. In the Ohio venture he hoped to recuperate his fortunes, and doubtless would have done so in time, but he did not live long enough to accomplish it. When in 1789, Letters of Administration were issued to his son, Enoch, his estates, both in Middletown and Marietta, were found to be insolvent.

The two following letters to Enoch, one from his brother William Walter, and the other from his mother, make clear the straitened circumstances in which the General's wife and children found themselves:—

December 17th, 1789.

DEAR BROTHER.—We have received the melancholy account of the fate of our dear parent. Your own feelings will enable you to judge of ours, but we must not unman ourselves in a manner unbecoming us. We are to consider that it is a scene through which we all must sooner or later pass. We can, my dear brother, reflect with the most exquisite consolatory pleasure that our dear father lived a strictly virtuous life, believed in the Divine Revelations and made them his rule of faith, and, having persevered in that belief and line of conduct for upwards of fifty years, we know he must have laid down his life with a firm reliance and certainty of awaking in the blessed regions of his God and Creator. A virtuous man never fears or dreads the pangs of death. My dear brother, we must not let our grief deprive us of our reason; we must consider that the care of the family devolves upon us and see that every measure which prudence can dictate be taken to make the little flock comfortable and happy. I will be their father so long as I have life, and my estate to the last

copper shall be theirs as well as mine. You will take every precaution with respect to the estate with you; I shall take care here and we must see that it is so placed as not to be wrested from us and beggar the children. Colonel Wadsworth will be their patron and friend. All Esther's relatives will do everything in their power to assist a distressed and helpless family. It will be best for you to come on here as soon as possible with the papers. Should the body of our deceased parent be found, let it be interred at Fort Pitt; of this don't fail and I will cause a monument to be erected. If he should have been found and buried, don't fail, my dear brother, to have him removed to Pittsburg. I shall never forgive you if you do.

Your afflicted brother,

To Enoch Parsons at Marietta. WM. W. PARSONS.

MIDDLETOWN, *February 15th, 1790.*

MY DEAR SON.—Mr. Meigs was kind enough to call this day and politely offer to carry a letter for me to you. I feel but little courage to attempt writing and the complicated miseries around seem oftentimes too much for me. The late death of your father is so distressing that many times I am obliged to try to divert my mind from the thought, or it would sink all my drooping spirits; and then again how is it possible to forbear deploring such a loss as he is to our family and to those at home insensible of their irreparable loss. We cannot lament the loss of your father too much. May these grievous afflictions work for our good. Remember his good advice as his last words, "we must go to him, he won't return to us." I am exceedingly concerned for you. I fear your troubles will be too hard for you. I know they must be great. Don't be concerned for me. I hope, sincerely, nothing will prevent you returning soon to us. William, I expect, will write you upon business and give you a particular account how matters have been conducted. I flatter myself that some way may be opened that you may be permitted yet to spend the remainder of your life in this part of the world. I find we have some good friends, and I think they will prove themselves such, who were such to your deceased father. We have their assurances. May I soon hear from you. To see you soon would be the greatest satisfaction and pleasure that I could conceive of in this transitory life, and none prays more ardently for your spiritual and temporal welfare than

Your Affectionate Mother,

To Enoch Parsons at Marietta. MEHETABLE PARSONS.

The children of General Parsons living at the time of his

death, were:—William Walter, twenty-seven years old, who, in 1784, had married Esther Phillips of Middletown; Lucia, then twenty-five, who, in 1785, had married Stephen Titus Hosmer, then a young lawyer just settled in practice at Middletown, but subsequently Chief Justice of the State; Enoch, just twenty, whose good friends at the Session of the General Assembly in the May following his return from Ohio, (1791) secured for him the appointment of High Sheriff of Middlesex County, an office he held for twenty-eight years. During his long life he amassed a large fortune, and for many years and until the expiration of its charter, was President of the Connecticut Branch of the Bank of the United States. Mehetable, a girl of seventeen, whom the General hoped to have taken with him to the Territory, who, in 1796, married Dr. William Brenton Hall of Middletown; Phebe, then fourteen, who in 1797 became Mrs. Samuel Tiffin; Samuel Holden, then twelve years old, who married Esther Sage of Middletown, and died in the West Indies in 1811; and Margaret, then a child of four, who was twice married, first, to Stephen Hubbard of Middletown, and second, to Alfred Lathrop of Carthage, New York. Among her grandchildren was, George Parsons Lathrop, well known in the literary world, who married Rose, daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The house in Middletown where Parsons lived, on Main street opposite the Park, is still standing. In the old cemetery on the same street, surrounded by the graves of his kindred, is a marble monument which records his death, but marks an empty grave. The inscription on the front is: "In memory of the Honorable Samuel Holden Parsons, who was drowned in the Great Beaver Creek in the State of Ohio, the 17th day of November, A. D., 1789, aged 52 years. His body is interred on the south bank of Beaver Creek near its confluence with the Ohio River." On the rear:—"In memory of Mrs. Mehetable Parsons, relict of the Hon. Samuel H. Parsons, who died Aug. 7th, A. D., 1802, aged 59 years." Inscribed on the east and west sides is the Parsons line from the first settler. On the west side:—"I. Benjamin Parsons, born in England; died in Springfield, Mass., Aug. 24, 1689. II. Ebenezer, son of Benjamin, born in Springfield Nov. 17, 1688; died Sept. 23, 1752. III. Rev. Jonathan, son of Ebenezer, born Nov. 30, 1705; died in New-

buryport, July 19, 1776." On the east side:—"IV. Samuel Holden, son of Jonathan, born in Lyme, Conn., May 14, 1737; died Nov. 17, 1789, and was buried at New Brighton, Penn. He was a Major General in the American Army of the Revolution and from 1787 to the day of his death, was first Judge in and over the Territory of the United States Northwest of the river Ohio. V. Enoch, son of Samuel Holden, born in Lyme, Nov. 5, 1769; died in Hartford, July 9, 1846."

General Parsons was a man of high moral and intellectual qualities. In religion, he was a Puritan, following in the footsteps of his honored father, as he also followed him in patriotic emotions, aspirations and acts. In the law he was able and successful, to the practice of which he was admitted three years after his graduation at Harvard. His election eighteen times to the General Assembly, proves him to have been a favorite with the people. In the Legislature he rendered important service to the State. He was one of the earliest and most strenuous in opposing the encroachments of Great Britain. "The idea of inalienable allegiance to any Prince or State," wrote Parsons to Samuel Adams, "is an idea to me inadmissible; and I cannot see but that our ancestors when they first landed in America, were as independent of the Crown or King of Great Britain as if they never had been his subjects." He was the first to suggest a general Congress of all the Colonies in order to secure concert of action, and did not relax his efforts until delegates were elected and the Congress assembled. As a member of the Committee of Correspondence, he was unremitting in his endeavors to arouse the people and stir up a spirit of resistance. The possible consequences to himself he fearlessly disregarded. To Tryon's brutal threats he defiantly replied: "A justifiable resistance against unwarrantable invasions of the natural and social rights of mankind, if unsuccessful, I am sensible, according to the fashion of the world, will be called rebellion; but when successful, will be viewed as a noble struggle for everything important in life. Whether I am now considered as a revolted subject of the King of Great Britain, or in any other light by his subjects, is very immaterial and gives me little concern; future ages, I hope, will do justice to my intentions, and the present to the humanity of my conduct." Within ten days after

the fight at Lexington, he set on foot the expedition to surprise Ticonderoga. A few weeks later, he led in person a regiment to Boston and was present at the battle of Bunker Hill. All through the war he was a rank, aggressive Republican, intolerant of the shortcomings of Congress, and impatient of the dilatoriness and apathy of the States. In the Cause of Independence he was a positive, compelling force, vigilant, active, uncompromising, fruitful in plans and suggestions, full of confidence and hope himself and a source of inspiration and encouragement for others, and never once lost faith in the justice of the Cause or in its final successful outcome. There is less of doubt and discouragement in his letters than in those of Washington or of most of the Revolutionary writers. Even John Adams said after the war was over, "there was not a moment during the Revolution when I would not have given everything I possessed for a restoration of the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have had a sufficient security for its continuance." Parsons never conceded so much as this. He never uttered a word in favor of a settlement on the old basis. This idea had many adherents in Connecticut and was the main idea held out by the British to defeat Independence; but with Parsons, as with Washington, it was Independence or nothing. He had sacrificed the interests of his family, his property and his health to the Cause, and his determined, uncompromising spirit would consent to nothing short of unconditional surrender on the part of the British Crown.

General Parsons' military career was honorable and successful. Had he enjoyed the advantages of a military education, or possessed the military experience of some of the other generals, it might have been more brilliant, though perhaps no more useful. He made no great reputation as a fighting general, for few opportunities occurred for testing his qualities in this direction. There was little fighting during the Siege of Boston. In the retreat from New York, the panic-stricken troops could not be forced into action, notwithstanding the united efforts of Washington, Putnam, Parsons and his regimental officers. At West Point and in the Highlands, where he was stationed during the greater part of the war, scarcely a hostile shot was fired. He was never out of Massachusetts, New York or Connecticut,

except when sent with his brigade to reinforce Washington in New Jersey, and then the British were in full retreat. The right of the army was not seriously engaged with the enemy during any of the time which he commanded it. But his numerous opinions as to the proper disposition of the army called for by Washington from time to time, abundantly show that his generalship was broad and his grasp of the military situation comprehensive. When instrusted with an independent command, he seems to have been uniformly successful. In the fight on Battle Hill in Greenwood Cemetery, he twice drove the British from the field. In his two expeditions to Long Island, he accomplished fully the objects in view. When Tryon invaded Connecticut and burned Norwalk, with the aid of his Continentals he drove him to his ships. His winter attack upon Morrisania displayed admirable generalship and won for him the thanks of Congress.

But the great field of his usefulness was in the discharge of duties not strictly military. To raise and maintain an army, not how to fight it, was the great problem of the war. As the war progressed, the New England States seemed to lose somewhat of that enthusiasm with which they began the struggle. In the absence of immediate danger, the spirit of gain seems to have dominated their feelings of patriotism. Instead of hurrying *en masse* to the field of their own accord, infinite urging and pressing became necessary to secure recruits. It was exceedingly difficult to induce the States to furnish even their quotas of men and supplies, and the army was in constant danger of being disbanded through their apathy and neglect. It was under these circumstances that Parsons' influence and address enabled him to render a vastly greater service to his country than he could have done in the field, by securing from an unwilling people the men and supplies without which the war could not be carried on. As we have seen in his letters to Trumbull, he was compelled at times to use plain language, but the very people he was severe with showed their confidence in his ability and patriotism by intrusting him with the defense of the State. In this most important, if not conspicuous service, tact, management, business talent, diplomacy and statesmanship—qualities which Parsons possessed in a marked degree—were called for rather than

mere generalship. The same qualities stood him in good stead after the War when called upon to negotiate treaties with the Indians in the Northwest Territory; and again, when under the Ordinance of 1787 it became his duty as Chief Judge of the Western Territory, in conjunction with Governor St. Clair and Judge Varnum, to frame and enact a Code of Laws for its government, a Code which must have been very largely his work and which stands as a monument to his industry, good judgment and intimate and accurate legal knowledge. The death of General Parsons at this time was a great loss to the Territory, in which, had his life been spared, he must have proved a very conspicuous figure.

Headley, in his "Washington and his Generals," describes Parsons "as one of those generals whose services are not to be measured by the battles they fought. They hold a prominent place in the military history of our country, though not so conspicuous in its military scenes. General Parsons was a man of strong intellect, a staunch patriot and rendered his country great service. The name is one of the first in New England." Hollister, in his "History of Connecticut," speaks of him "as one of the most heroic soldiers, as well as one of the best lawyers and most scholarly writers of the Revolutionary Period;" and again, "as one of the bravest and most accomplished officers of the Revolutionary Era. . . ." George Bancroft, in his "History of the Constitution of the United States," characterizes him as "an early and a wise and resolute patriot." Dr. Loring, in his address at Marietta on the 95th Anniversary of the Settlement of Ohio, refers to him as "a sagacious companion of Washington, one of the foremost and ablest citizens of the State of his adoption;" and Senator Hoar, in his oration on the same spot in 1888, eulogizes him as "soldier, scholar, judge, one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned, who first suggested the Continental Congress, from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War."

INDEX

Adams, John, 14, 44, 46, 54, 55
Adams, Samuel, 20
Alden, Major, 332
Allen, Col. Ethan, 25
André, Major John, 305-7
Army, strength of, 48, 187, 294; in 1778 at White Plains, 189; position of, 194; reorganization for 1781, 318; at Peekskill, 364; joins French army at N. Y., 368; allied armies march to Yorktown, 392
Arnold, Benedict, 5, 24, 93, 301, 302, 304-5, 307, 308, 310, 311
Arnold's treason, singular circumstance connected with, 307-311

Babcock, Adam, 24
Barnes, Thomas, 174
Battles of: Bemis Heights, 112; Brandywine, 111; Bunker Hill, 30-31; Germantown, 111; Harlem Heights, 69; Long Island, 50-58; Monmouth, 188; Quaker Hill, 192; Saratoga, 112; White Plains, 72
Barton, William, Judge, N. W. Ter., 563
Benson, Egbert, 499
Big Beaver Creek, 569, 571, 573
Billy "The Midshipman," 32, 192, 266, 284, 287, 288, 292
Bishop, Samuel, 19
Bissell, H., 338
"Black Hall Boys," 8
Blockhouse on Big Beaver, 568-574
Board of General Officers on André trial, 306; as to Plan of Campaign of 1781, 361; Report, 362-3
Board of War, 409
Boom over Hudson at West Point, 141
Boston, Siege of, 29-38; Evacuation of, 38
Boston Port Bill, 17
Brackett's Tavern, 515
Breck, Rev. Mr., 528
Brooks, John, 261
Brown, Col. John, 25
Bunch of Grapes Tavern, 510
Burgoyne's Campaign, 104, 106; surrender, 112; his estimate of American troops, 68
Burnett as to first settlers of Ohio, 495
Burr, Aaron, 186
Burrall, Col. Chas. E., 3
Bushnell, David, and his Submarine Torpedo Boat, 60
Butler, Gen. Richard: Indian Commissioner with Parsons; left Carlisle with future President, Col. James Monroe, 470, 564, 572, 575, 577, 578, 580
Buzzard's Bay, Gen. Grey's raid on towns of, 199

Carlisle, Pa., 473, 519
Carrington, Edward, 472, 498
Carroll, Chas., of Carrolton, 12
Carter, Robert Nicholas, 35
Catharine of Russia; her reply to George III., 35
Chandler, Col., 250
Chapman, Capt. James, 29
Chatterton Hill, 72
Clarke, Gen. Geo. Rogers: Indian Commissioner with Parsons and Butler; the "Hannibal of the West," 470
Clark, Maj. John, Jr., 276
Clinton, Gov. George, 73, 79, 116, 125, 127, 135, 140, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 161, 170, 174, 185, 199, 207, 211, 240, 248, 282, 430
Clinton, Sir Henry, 51, 65, 106, 115, 116, 120; assumes command Br.

Army, 187; Washington suggests to Parsons his capture, 158; expedition up the Hudson in 1777, 116; in 1779, 247; S. Carolina, 280; personality and character, 428; 223, 306, 456
Clinton, Gen. James, 43-59; 116
Clothing, unequal distribution of, 211
Coast Guards, 2
Code of Laws by Gov. and Judges for N. W. Ter., 524; differ as to powers, 524-5
Coit, Capt. William, 28; Commands Privateer Harrison, 29
Coit, Joshua, 525
Collier, Sir George., 255
Colonial Policy of Great Britain, 16-17
Committee of Coöperation, 292; of Pay-Table, 27
Conciliatory Bill of Lord North, 178
Congress, incompetency of, 211; favoritism, 241; arbitrariness, 303-4; indiscreet appointments of, 315; thanks to Parsons and men for Morrisania expedition, 335
Connecticut Charter Boundaries, 548; adverse decision as to her claims, 549
Connecticut Division, complimented by Baron Steuben, 270; unsurpassed by any corps in army, 273; assigned right of first line in attack on N. Y. in 1781, 367
Connecticut Line, 1-3; militia, 2; general officers and service, 4-5; troops at Boston, 36; homesickness, 36; organization for 1776, 37; eight regiments for three years, 85; reorganized in 1778, 191; destitution of, 226; disaffection of in 1780, 370
Connecticut Reserve, 549; Parsons' syndicate to buy 24,000 acres, 549; agreement with, 550; disposition of by State, 553-4
Connecticut Village, 318, 409
Constitution of U. S. submitted to Congress, May 28, 1787; to States, 512; adopted by Conn. Convention by a three-fourths vote, 512
Cook, Gov., of R. I., 36
Cornwallis Lord, 51, 53, 73, 81, 393
Councils of War; Brooklyn Aug. 1776, 57; N. Y., 63; White Plains, Nov. 1776, 76; Fredericksburgh, 194
County Court opened at Marietta, 526
Courts-Martial, 213-214; judgments of, 215
Cow-Boys and Skinners, 390
Currency, the depreciation of, 266
Cutler, Rev. Manasseh; character and ability, 503; agreed that he should continue negotiations with Congress, 503; visit to Parsons in Middletown and journey to N. Y., 503-4; suggests amendments to Ordinance of 1787, 505; difficulties in securing favorable action of Congress, 508-10; overcomes them by supporting St. Clair for Governor instead of Parsons, and doubling amount of his purchase for benefit of Duer and friends, 508-9; finds Parsons prefers to be first Judge if St. Clair is to be Governor, 510; completes contract for nearly 6,000,000 acres of land, 511; settlement of Ohio regarded as an event of national importance, 545; his visit to Marietta, 530-32

Danbury: Tryon's raid on, 93; 117, 194, 202, 292, 294, 302, 352
Dane, Nathan, 497
Davenport, Abraham, 391
Davenport, James, commissioned with Parsons to treat with Indians on Conn. Reserve, 565
Deane, Silas, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26
De Kalb, Gen., 194, 273
De Lancey, Col. James; captured, his imprisonment demanded, 125; demand seconded by Gov. Clinton, 126
De Lancey, Gen. Oliver; burning of his Bloomingdale home, 132

De Lancey, Major Oliver, 431, 436, 438, 440
Denny, Major, Ebenezer, 517, 576
D'Estaing, Count, arrives with French Fleet, 191
Devens, Judge, 420
De Wurmb, Col., 437
Dickinson, Gen., 124; descent on Staten Island, 133
Dobb's Ferry, 367, 368, 389
Doughty, Major John, 523; demolishes Fort McIntosh, 523
Duer, Col. William, 83; Cutler dines with him; is astonished at the variety of wines and liquors on his table, 505
Duportail, Gen., 361
Durkee, Col. John, 37, 318
Dwight, Rev. Dr. Timothy, 162; chaplain Parsons' brigade, 163; dedicates to Washington his poem, "Conquest of Canaan by Joshua," 163; correspondence as to, etc., 163, 164, 165, 237, 339, 567
Dyer, Eliphalet, 18, 23, 548

Edwards Rev. Jonathan, 8
Ellsworth, Chief Justice Oliver, 10, 558
Elmore, Col. Samuel, 3
Emmerick's Chasseurs, 122, 127, 367
Encampment at White Plains of Washington's Army in 1778, 189
Evans, Rev. Dr., 229

Fairfield, Conn., 251, 255
Fairfield Co. investigation, 339; testimony, list of accused, 344; 356
Falls of the Ohio, 478
Flour, Scarcity of, 207
Forts: Arnold, 184, 185; Clinton and Montgomery, 116, 123; Finney, 477; Griswold, 217; Harmar, 516, 523; McIntosh, 474, 523; Washington, 77; William Henry, 16
Fredericksburgh Precinct, 194, 203
French Army rendezvous at Providence, 364; its march to the Hudson, constant ovation, 365
French fleet under D'Estaing, 191, 192; that under Admiral Ternay arrived, 296
French and Indian War, 15-16; claims of English and French, 15; Canada ceded to the English, 15-16
French treaty ratified by Congress, 187

Gage, Gen. Thomas, 30
Gates, Gen. Horatio, 33, 133; commands Nor. Dept., 173; his army joins Putnam after Burgoyne's surrender, 133; commands Eastern Dept., 193, 198, 199; letters, 174, 175, 176, 177, 411; his home in Va., 566-7
George III., 35
Germain, Lord Geo., 59, 68, 269
Glover, Gen. John, 102, 190
Governing Families in New England; the family circle of Ursula Wolcott a notable example of, 9-10
Government Securities, depreciation of, 289-90
Governor and Council of Conn., 192, 395, 396
Graham, Col. Morris, 174
Grant, Lt. Col., 52; killed, battle Long Island, 52
Gray, Col., 351
Great Britain, cost of war and results, 416
Greene, Gen. Nathaniel; asks leave to resign, 227; indignation at threatened removal, 303-4; commands at Tappan at time of Arnold's defection, 298
Greenleaf, Moses, 12
Greenleaf, Simon, 12
Griswold, Judge John, 8-10
Griswold, Matthew, 9
Griswold, Gov. Matthew, 10, 18, 548
Grosvenor, Col., 233

Hall, Gov. of Vt., 24
Hall, Dr. William B., 583
Hamilton, Alex., 211, 298
Hancock, John, 13, 22, 43
Hand, Gen., 473

Harmar, Gen. Joseph, 520, 570
Harrisburgh, 473
Harrison, Col., 75, 77
Harvard Coll., 6; confers Master's degree on Parsons in 1781, 360
Hawthorne, Rose, 583
Hazen, Col., 222, 231, 326, 327-8
Heart, Capt. Jonathan, 485-6, 568
Heath, Gen. William, 33, 39, 41, 60, 71, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 249, 250, 320, 334, 336, 337, 369, 394, 405, 406, 407, 410
Heister, Gen., 51, 59
Hendricks, John and Baker, 277
Heron, William, of Redding Ridge, Conn., 419; character and connections, 421-3; member Conn. Legislature, 420; of convention to ratify Fed. Const., 422, 512; stood well with the leading men of Conn., and believed to be a "Consistent National Whig," 422; employed by Gen. Parsons as a spy, and found faithful, 418; recommended by him to Washington in a letter, 418; letters and conversations noted in Sir Henry Clinton's "Secret Service Record," a letter to Gov. Robertson, 312, and one in 1782 to Clinton, have raised a question as to Heron's loyalty, and been made the basis of a slander against Parsons, 420; though his evident purpose was to gain the confidence of the enemy, the more readily to secure information, 424; his methods of espionage, 424-8; gullibility of Clinton, 428-9; his Adj. General, 428-9; facts showing that he was lying to the enemy, 430-48; alleged letter from Parsons to Heron, 448; Heron cuts off signature, 449; comments on, 454-6; letter, Parsons to Mumford, four days later, contrasted, 449-454; comments on letter to Clinton, 456-9; estimate of Heron, 459; the annotator of the "Record" and his mistaken conclusions, 458-9
Heth, Col., 488
Hewlett, Col. Richard, 108, 109
Hickey, plot to assassinate Washington, 42
Highlands, where best defended, 121
Hillhouse, Senator James, 10
Hinman, Col. Benjamin, 1
Hoar, Senator George F., 420
Horseneck (Greenwich), 73, 110, 124, 125, 134, 201, 215, 233, 327, 329, 336, 403, 472
Hosmer, Stephen Titus, Chief Justice 10, 464
House of Burgesses of Va., 19
Howe, Gen. Lord, 31, 43, 48, 51-58, 65, 71, 101, 102, 111
Howe, Gen. Robert, 286, 293, 300, 320, 323, 389, 393
Hubbard, Stephen, 583
Hull, Col., 327
Humphreys, David, 163; poem, 205
Huntington Bay, 89, 244, 297, 396, 399, 403
Huntington, Jabez, 28
Huntington, Gen. Jedidiah, 2, 5, 40, 48, 202; mutiny in his brigade, 208; 237, 273, 324
Huntington and Chester, 551
Hutchins, Thos. U. S. Geographer General, 504

Inaugural ceremonies, 513-14
Independence of U. S. recognised by France, 187
Indians' plea for their lands, 474-5
Inoculation of troops, 88-90
Instructions as to survey of Conn. Reserve, 550
Irvine, Gen. William, 473, 575

Jackson, Isaac Rand, 12
Jameson, Col., 305
Jay, John, 223, 242, 243, 263, 283
Jefferson, Thos., 506; his names for State of N. W. Ter., 506
Johnson, William Samuel, 461, 464, 466, 467, 468, 469, 533
Jones, John Paul; captures Serapis and Countess of Scarborough, 271
Jones, Joseph, 291
Judges, Superior Court of Conn., 462
Jumel Mansion, 63-4

Kingstreet, 74, 82
Kingston, burned by Gen. Vaughn, 122
Kips Bay Affair, 64-68
Kissam, Maj., 437
Knowlton, Col. Thos., 30; his corps of Rangers, 69; killed on Harlem Heights, 69
Knox, Gen. John, 324, 361, 512
Knyphausen, Gen., 71, 76, 111, 280, 368
Kosciusko, Thaddeus, the Polish patriot, 161

Lafayette, Marquis de, joins Sullivan in Rhode Island with part of Parsons' brigade in 1788, 190; in April, 1780, at Morristown, commands Parsons' Division during his absence in Conn., 273; in July meets Rochambeau at Newport and, *en route*, calls on Trumbull, Parsons and Wadsworth at Hartford, 296
Lamb, Col., 85, 123, 237
Lane, Phebe, 288
Lathrop, Alfred, 583
Lathrop, Geo. Parsons, 583
Laurens, Mr., Pres't of Congr., 128
Lauzun, Duke of, 364, 366, 367, 368, 390
Law, Richard, 23
Lawrence, Oliver, Parsons' A. D. C., 351
Lebanon, Conn., Winter quarters of Lauzun's Legion, 318
Lee, Gen. Chas., Maj. Gen., 33; collects troops in Conn., 39; commands in Conn., 76
Lee, Arthur, opinion as to Pittsburgh's future, 476
Lee, Ezra, operates Bushnell's Torpedo boat, 60
Leggett, Abraham, 125

Letters from General Parsons to:
John Adams, 54, 55
Samuel Adams, 20
Benedict Arnold, 302, 302, 308
Col. Atlee, 265
H. Bissell, of Windham, 338
Board of War, 409
John Brooks, 261
Mr. Burr, 346
Col. Edward Carrington, 472
His children, 480, 517
Gov. Geo. Clinton, 73, 127, 135, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 185, 207, 240, 248, 282, 430
Sir Henry Clinton, 147
Committee of Congress, 292
Conn. Gen. Assembly, 25
Council at Fort Finney, address, 483
Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth, 558
Gen. Horatio Gates, 175, 176, 177, 411, 557
Gov. and Council of Conn., 192, 395, 396
Gen. Nathaniel Greene, 225, 227
Col. Grosvenor, 233
Alex. Hamilton, 298
Gen. Wm. Heath, 60, 405, 410
Gen. Robert Howe, 286, 293, 300
John Jay, 223, 242, 243
Senator Wm. Samuel Johnson, 461, 464, 466, 467, 468, 469, 533
Joseph Jones, 291
Judges, Sup. Ct. Conn., 462
Col. Lamb, 237
Mr. Laurens, Prest. Congress, 128
Eliphalet Lockwood, 300
Mr. Lovell, 241
Capt. Thomas Machin, 157
Gen. Alex. McDougall, 171, 172, 206, 207, 228, 232, 233
Thos. Mumford, 138, 139, 139, 184, 188, 189, 256, 262, 287, 452
Norwalk Selectmen, 350
Enoch Parsons, 562, 568
Thomas Parsons, 80
Wm. W. Parsons, 471
Prest. of Congress, 415
Gen. Israel Putnam, 114, 115
Col. Root, 265
Gen. St. Clair, 552, 563
Gen. Silliman, 230
Mr. Sproat, Com. of prisoners, 289
Troops on Setauket exped'n, 109
Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, 117, 118, 119, 123, 159, 217, 220, 221, 222, 227, 239, 299, 319, 324,

324-5, 336, 337, 341-343, 345, 375, 376, 380, 398, 399, 402, 402, 407, 409, 431
Joseph Trumbull, 24
Rev. Mr. Trumbull, 300
Gen. Tryon, 129, 130, 258
Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth, 162, 175, 321, 471
Lieut. Daniel Waite, 89
Rev. Dr. Wm. Walter, 181, 285
General Washington, 86, 87, 90, 90, 90, 92, 92, 93, 93, 94, 95, 97, 100, 102, 105, 105, 106, 135, 152, 153, 156, 158, 164, 173, 185, 200, 201, 208, 209-10, 222, 228, 230, 231, 234, 236, 241, 242, 247, 249, 296, 253, 274, 281, 284, 292, 294, 252, 298, 302, 302, 307, 307, 307-8, 316, 317, 323, 326, 340, 341, 346, 350, 354, 355, 357, 358, 359, 370, 374, 390, 411, 414, 414, 418, 519
Col. Samuel B. Webb, 108, 110, 138, 178, 179, 360
His wife, 31, 82, 103, 192, 291, 292, 315, 335, 520, 527, 533, 536, 554, 556, 560, 562, 565, 567
President Willard, account of Parsons' discoveries in the West, 489-495

Letters to General Parsons from:
John Adams, 14, 44, 46
Richard Butler, 564
Gov. George Clinton, 145, 161
Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight, 237, 239
John Hancock, 43
Gen. Wm. Heath, 78, 250, 320, 320, 404, 406, 406-7
Wm. Heron, 442, 443
Gen. Jedidiah Huntington, 324
Huntington and Chester, 550
Gen. John Knox, 512
Benjamin Lincoln, Jr., 488
Col. Malcom, 185
Gen. McDougall, 171
David Parsons, 410
Gen. Israel Putnam, 108, 127
Gen. St. Clair, 552
Stephen St. John, 401
Joseph Strang, 144
Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, 345, 377, 388, 397
Gov. Tryon, 129
Col. Upham, Br. Com. of prisoners, 400
Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth, 322
Rev. Dr. Wm. Walter, 314, 463
Gen. Washington, 87, 88, 91, 95, 99, 151, 152, 156, 158, 159, 167, 234, 253, 275, 339, 341, 351, 355, 357, 371, 389
Gen. David Waterbury, 403
Col. S. B. Webb, 338

Letters from General Washington to:
Army on success at Morrisania, 334
Benedict Arnold, 301, 302, 304
Board General officers in Highlands, 361
Robert Nicholas Carter, 35
Maj. John Clark, Jr., 276
Committee of Coöperation, 292
Congress as to location of troops, 201
Gen. Dickinson, 124
Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight, 164
Gen. Greene as to threatened removal, 303-4
Gen. Wm. Heath, 78, 79, 81, 83, 320, 334, 336, 337, 394
Gen. Lafayette, 392
Gen. Lincoln, 81
Chancellor Livingston, 166
Gen. Maxwell, 277
Gen. McDougall, 94, 168, 170
Brigadier Nelson in Va., 190-91
General Parsons, 87, 88, 91, 95, 99, 151, 152, 156, 158, 159, 167, 234, 253, 275, 339, 341, 351, 355, 357, 371, 389
President of Congress, 335
Gen. Israel Putnam, 140, 141, 167
Count Rochambeau, 365
President Siles, Yale College, thanking him for degree of LL.D., 360
Maj. Tallmadge, 279, 280
Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, 369, 371, 386

John Augustine Washington, 192, 193
Letters to General Washington from:
Board General officers in Highlands, 362
Gov. George Clinton, 116
Abraham Davenport, 391
Wm. Duer, 88
Rev. Dr. Timothy Dwight, 168
Col. Harrison, 77
Gen. Wm. Heath, 83-4
Chancellor Livingston, 166
Gen. McDougall, 169
General Parsons, 86, 87, 88, 90, 90, 90, 92, 92, 93, 93, 94, 95, 97, 100, 102, 105 ,105, 106, 135, 152, 153, 156, 158, 164, 173, 185, 200, 201, 208, 209-10, 222, 228, 230, 231, 234, 236, 241, 242, 247, 249, 252, 253, 274, 281, 284, 292, 294, 296, 298, 302, 302, 307, 307-8, 316, 317, 323, 326, 340, 341, 346, 350, 354, 355, 357, 358, 359, 370, 374, 390, 411, 414, 414, 418, 519
General Israel Putnam, 113, 116-17, 122, 142, 236, 274
Gen. Scott, 83
Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, 89-90, 372, 374, 378, 387
Capt. Joseph Walker, Parsons' A. D. C., as to Parsons' illness, 352
Letters from:
John Adams to Gen. Greene, 47
Maj. Alden to Maj. Tallmadge, 332
Benedict Arnold (Gustavus) to John André (John Anderson), 308
Same to Col. Sheldon, 310
Thomas Barnes to Gov. Clinton, 174
Gen. Burgoyne to Lord Geo. Germain, 68
Gen. Richard Butler to Gen. Irvine, 575
Same to Enoch Parsons, 577, 578, 579-81
Gov. George Clinton to N. Y. Convention, 79
Same to Gen. Gates, 174
Same to Gov. Trumbull, 170
Sir Henry Clinton to Lord Geo. Germain, 269
Committee of Conn. officers in N. Y. to Gov. Trumbull, 382-4
Conn. Com. of Correspondence to John Hancock, 21, 22
Manasseh Cutler to Nathan Dane, 497
Same to Winthrop Sargent, 496
Col. Morris Graham to Gen. Gates, 174
Alex. Hamilton to Gov. Clinton, 211
Col. Harrison to Gen. Greene, 74-5
Same to Gen. Heath, 77
Capt. Jonathan Heart to Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth, 486
Gen. Heath to Gen. Waterbury, 406
Wm. Heron to Maj. De Lancey, Adj. Gen. Br. Army, 431, 436, 438, 439
John Jay to Congress, 283
Abr'm Leggett to Gov. Clinton, 125
Oliver Lawrence, Parsons' A. D. C. to Col. Gray, 351
Gen. McDougall to Gov. Clinton, 199
Lieut. McDowell to Enoch Parsons, 579
Col. Oswald to Col. Lamb, 123
Enoch Parsons to Wm. W. Parsons, 555
Same to his mother, 560
Mehetable Parsons to Enoch Parsons, 582
Wm. Walter Parsons to Enoch Parsons, 581
Elisha Rexford to Gov. Trumbull, 352
Lt. Hezekiah Rogers to Phebe Lane, 288
Gen. St. Clair to Joshua Coit, 525
Robert Troup to Gov. Clinton, 174
Col. Upham to Gen. Waterbury, 403

Capt. Walker to Col. S. B. Webb, 281
Maj. Wyllys to Col. S. B. Webb, 352

Lexington and Concord, 1
Lincoln, Gen., 81, 82, 366, 367, 389, 413, 488
Livingston, Chancellor, 166
Livingston, Gov., 120
Lloyds Neck, 244, 354, 396, 400, 403, 404, 407
Lockwood, Eliphalet, 300
London's contribution to the Boston poor, 17
Long Island, Parson's expedition to, 134
Loring, Geo. B., 420
Louisburg, capture of, 16
Lovell, Mr., 241
Lyme, Conn. 172

Machin, Capt. Thomas, 157
Madison, James, 499
Malcom, Col., 115, 185
Map showing place of Parsons' death and burial, 570
Marietta, 516; named for French Queen, 517; 4th July, 523; civil government organized, 523; treaty with Indians, 536; Thanksgiving proclaimed, 537
Marquand, Capt., A. D. C. to Knyphausen, 368
Mather, Richard, 14
Mather, Mehetable, 14
Mather, Rev. Moses, 401
Maxwell, Gen., 277
May, Col. John, diary of, 520-22
Mayflower or Adventure Galley, 516
McCurdy, Judge, 420
McDougall, Gen. Alex., 43, 94, 101, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172; opinion of Gen. Gates, 199; experience with a Yankee division, 200; 204, 206, 207, 228, 232, 234, 249
McDowell, Maj. Nathan, 522, 569, 571-2, 579
McVeigh, Wayne, 420
Mead, Col., 233; disobedience of orders, 336
Meeker, John, 277
Meigs, Col. Return Jonathan; Sag Harbor expedition, 97; voted a sword by Congress, 99; 106, 134, 135, 318, 561
Memorial of the Ohio Co., presented by Parsons, 499-501; Bancroft's description of its effect on Congress, 498
Middletown, Conn., 461; Cutler's description, 503
Mifflin, Gen. Thomas, 58, 59, 63
Miles, Col., 51, 53
Military opinions of Parsons, given at the request of Washington, April, 1778, as to feasibility of attack on N. Y., 169; 196, 249; advises defence of Highlands and recovery of Stony Point, 260
Montgomery, Gen. Richard, 33
Monument to Parsons in Middletown cemetery, 573-4; inscriptions on, 583-4
Morris, Gouverneur, 211
Morrisania, Parsons' expedition against, 327-335
Morristown, 81, 272-3, 274, 318, 320
Mott, Capt. Edward, 29
Mumford, Thomas, 24, 26, 138, 139, 185, 188, 189, 220, 256, 262, 287, 450, 452, 453
Murray, Mrs., entertains Gen. Howe while Putnam escapes, 65

Nelson, Gen., 190
New Brighton, 573-4; map of vicinity, 570
New Haven, 251, 255
New Haven, Hartford and Middletown, population in 1782, 461
New London; alarm, 79, 223; fortifications, 217-19
Newtown Tories, 300
New Windsor, Headquarters, July, 1779, 249
New York City; fortifications, 41-2; proposal to burn city when evacuated by Washington, 63; attempt on by Allied Armies, 366-7; reconnaisance in force, 389-

90; evacuated by British, Nov. 25, 1783, 417
New York, Western; Parsons' proposition to settle with his soldiers, 282-3
Nicholas, Robert Carter, 35
Nixon, Gen., 43, 49, 250
North, Lord; conciliatory bill, 178; fall of his ministry, 416
Northwest Ter., organized Oct. 5, 1787, 511
Norwalk, Conn., 252, 255
Norwalk Selectmen, as to Thos. Taylor, 349-50

Ohio Company; organized March, 1787, 496; Parsons elected director, 496; his memorial to Congress for sale of Ohio lands, 499; purchase effected by Cutler, 511; settlement, 515-16; regarded as an event of national inportance, 545; character of settlers, 495, 517, 545; eminent men among the stockholders, 546; directors meet at Marietta, 521
Ohio Company of 1748, builds fort at Pittsburgh, 15
Ordinance of 1787, 505; delayed by the memorial of Ohio Co., till July 13, 1787, 506; Southern members opposed introduction of slavery, 507; John Randolph reports against permitting it in Indiana, 507; N. W. Ter. organized under it, Oct., 1787, 511; Parsons' commission as Judge, 511
Osborne, Thomas, a spy, 302-3
Oswald, Lieut. Col., 123
Oyster Bay, 89, 403

Parsons, Enoch; returns with his father from Philadelphia, 555; appointed Reg. of Deeds and Clerk of Probate Court of Washington Co., 559; his diary, 559; describes the first celebration of Independence in the N. W. Ter., 560; Letters, 562, 568, 577, 578, 579, 580
Parsons, Rev. Jonathan, 8; marriage, 8; character, 10; death, 11
Parsons, Mrs. Mehetable (wife of the Gen.), 31, 82, 103, 192, 291, 292, 315, 335, 520, 527, 533, 536, 554, 556, 560, 562, 565, 567, 582
Parsons, Gen. Samuel Holden, 1; birth and lineage, 8; graduates at Harvard and studies law, 13; his college mates, 13; marriage, 14; elected to Conn. Assembly, 18; King's atty. for New London Co., 19; member Com. of Correspondence, 19; first to suggest a general congress of the Colonies, 20; plans capture of Ticonderoga, 24; Colonel of 6th Regt., 28; part of his Regt. engaged at Bunker Hill, 31; Col. of the new 10th Regt., 37; Boston evacuated March, 1776, 38; commands three regiments on march to N. Y., 40; Brigadier General, August 9, 1776, 43; ordered to Brooklyn, 48; as brigadier of the day, opens the battle of Long Island, 51-53; exploits Bushnell's submarine torpedo boat, 60; affair at Kips Bay, 64; at Harlem Heights, 69; holds extreme left at White Plains, 74; reinforces Washington in New Jersey, 78; commands the left of line in Heath's demonstration against N. Y., 82; organizes the Conn. Line for 1777, 85; orders inoculation of troops, 88; Meigs' expedition to Long Island, 97; in New Jersey in 1777, 102; expedition against Setauket, 108; against Long Island, 134; Clinton captures the forts in Highlands, 116; Parsons collects troops to oppose him, 117; Parsons-Tryon correspondence, 128-132, 258-9; in Nov. aids in movement against N. Y., 134; Feb., 1778, commands at West Point, 142; difficulties in constructing the Works, 143-156; Washington suggests to him to capture Sir H. Clinton in N. Y., 158-9; social life at the Point, 161-166; Dwight's poem, 163; advises against attack on N. Y.,

168; in camp with Washington's army at White Plains in 1778, 189; winter quarters at Redding, 204; commands at New London, Feb., 1779, 217; succeeds to permanent command of Conn. Division, 244; at West Point, 246; in Conn. to oppose Tryon's raid, 252; Dec., 1779 in winter quarters at Morristown with main army, 273; proposes to Gov. Clinton plan to settle Western N. Y. with his soldiers after the war, 282; Parsons' estate, 291; call from Lafayette at Hartford, 296; André's court-martial, 306; his health, 315; leave of absence, 316; Major General, Oct. 23, 1780, 317; reorganizes the Conn. Line for 1781, 318; Fairfield investigation, 339-357; his serious illness, 352; Yale College confers on him a Master's degree, 360; army concentrated at Peekskill, 364; commands the right of the first line in the demonstrations of the Allied Armies against New York, 367; occupied the Heights at Kingsbridge, 368; spirited correspondence between Washington, Trumbull and Parsons as to the demands of the Conn. Division, 370-78; in the Highlands during the Yorktown campaign, 394; urges capture of Lloyd's Neck, 396; organizes the defence of Conn., 397; in April, 1782, his health compels him to retire from active service, 412; his discharge granted by Congress, July 22, 1782, 416; removes his family to Middletown, Conn., 461; elected to Conn. Legislature, 462; Sept., 1785, a commissioner to extinguish Indian claims to land N. W. of the Ohio, 470; left home for the mouth of the Miami in Oct., 471; incidents of the journey, 471-477; arrives at Fort Finney, 477; treaty completed, 485; returns in March, 1786, 489; organization of Ohio Company, 496; elected director, 496; his memorial to Congress for sale of land to Co., 498; effect of, 498-9; sale concluded in July following, 509; N. W. Ter. organized in Oct., St. Clair Governor and Parsons first judge, 511; both reappointed by Washington upon organization of Fed. Govt., 563; Jan., 1788, member of Conn. Convention to ratify Fed. Const., 512; settlement of Ohio begins in spring of 1788, 515-16; arrives at Marietta, May, 1788, 520; code of laws for the Ter. prepared by Gov. and Judges, 524; Cutler's visit to Marietta and diary, 531-3; Parsons preaches a Thanksgiving sermon, the first in the Ter., 537-542; visits Philadelphia, 554; appointed by Conn. commissioner to treat with Indians on the Reserve, 565; forms syndicate to purchase 24,000 acres in the Reserve, 549; returning from a visit to his purchase, Nov. 17, 1789, attempting to shoot the rapids of the Big Beaver, his canoe was wrecked, and both he and a man with him were drowned, 570; map of vicinity of the accident, 570; the inscriptions on his monument at Middletown, 583-4; a fac-simile of his signature, 454; his children, 583; his character, his public services, the estimate in which he was held, 584-5-6-7

Parsons, Wm. Walter (Midshipman Billy, 284), 32, 192, 266, 284, 287, 288, 292, 471, 555, 582

Parsons, Thomas, 80

Patterson, Gen., 361

Payne, Benjamin, 19

Peabody, Rev. Dr., 420

Peekskill, rendezvous for troops, 1777, 101; 364

Pennsylvania Line, mutiny of, 320, 323

Penobscott expedition, 266

Phelps, Noah, 24

Phillips Manor, 127

Pitkin, Martha, 10
Pitkin, Wm., 10
Pitt, William, 16
Pittsburgh, 476
Prentice, Maj. Samuel, 28
Prescott, Col., Wm., 30, 31
Private warfare, 242-4
Purchase Road, 74
Putnam, Capt. Ezra, 515
Putnam, Gen. Israel, 1, 4, 5; Major Gen., 33; 51, 108, 113, 114, 115, 116, 120, 122, 124, 127, 133, 134, 140, 141, 142, 142, 166, 167, 194, 204, 212, 213, 226, 236, 244, 273 4
Putnam, Gen. Rufus, 515, 517, 523, 526, 531, 545

Quaker Hill, engagement at, 192

Rall, Col., 72
Redding Ridge, 204
Reed, James R. 43
Rexford, Elisha, 852, 353
Robertson dispatch, 312
Rochambeau, Count de, 296, 364, 365, 366, 391-2
Rogers, Lieut. Hezekiah, 288
Romaine, Bernard, 24
Rowland, Uriah, 356, 359
Root, Col., 265-7
Rum, an indispensable article, 205, 246
Rye Affair, 75
Rye Pond, 74

Sag Harbor, Meigs' expedition to, 97
St. Clair, Gen. Arthur, 43, 273; reception at Marietta, 523-25; reappointed Governor by Washington, 563; 522, 552; his Thanksgiving proclamation, 537
St. John, Stephen, 401
St. Mary's Pond, 72; affair at, 74
Saltonstall, Gurdon, 28
Salt Springs of the Mahoning, 560, 567
Sargent, Winthrop, 496, 523, 563
Saw Pitts (Port Chester), 74, 77, 110
Scammel, Col., 327
Schuyler, Gen. Phillip; Maj. Gen., 33
Scott, Gen. John Morin, 63, 92, 83
Secret Service Record of Sir H. Clinton, 423-4
Senecas, home of the, 260
Setauket, Parsons' expedition to, 108-110
Settlement of unoccupied lands in the West, 546
Shawanese Indians, 478
Shay's rebellion, 468; described by Parsons, 468-9
Sheldon, Col., 85, 302, 310, 366, 405
Sherman, Roger, 18, 23, 548
Sherman, Gen. W. T., Loring's pamphlet dedicated to, 421
Sherman, Col., 318, 327
Signature, fac-simile of Parsons', 454
Silliman, Gen. Ebenezer, 19, 59, 93, 230, 285
Smallwood, Gen., 314
Smiths Clove, 77, 249
Society of the Cincinnati; instituted in the Highlands, May 13, 1783; basic principles, deemed anti-republican, 463-4
Sound, Long Island, those living near in fear of attack, 391
Southampton, 223
Spencer, Gen. Joseph, 1, 4, 33, 34, 39, 41
Sproat, Col. Ebenezer, 515
Sproat, Mr., Com. Gen. of Prisoners, 289
Spy System of the Revolution, 274-281
States composing N. W. Ter., 524
Steuben Baron; compliments Conn. troops, 270
Stiles, Prest. Yale Col., 360
Stirling, Gen. Lord Wm. Alexander, 41, 42, 49, 51, 52, 53; in New Jersey, 78, 194
Stony Point, 247, 249, 259, 269
Strang, Joseph, 144
Strike of artificers at West Point, 149
Strong, Jedediah, 18
Sullivan, Gen. John, 33, 39, 41, 48,

192; expedition against the Senecas, 259-60
Sumrill's Ferry, 515-16
Swift, Col., 4, 318
Symmes, John Cleves, Judge N. W. Ter., 563
Syndicate to purchase land in Conn. Reserve, 549-52

Tallmadge, Maj. Benj., 279, 280, 305, 332, 404, 407-8
Taylor, Thomas, of Norwalk, 349-50
Ternay, Admiral, 296
Thomas, Gen. John, 33, 34
Ticonderoga, facts as to expedition against in 1775, 24; capture, 25; its great value, 27
Treaty of Fort Stanwix, Oct. 22, 1784; of Fort McIntosh, Jan. 21, 1785; territory ceded by, 482; of Fort Finney, Feb. 1, 1786, 482-486; territory ceded by, 485; Parsons' address and terms of treaty, 477-85; of Fort Harmar in Jan. 1788, 536-7
Trenton and Princeton, battles of, 80-81
Troup, Robert, Gates' A. D. C., 174
Trumbull, Gov. Jonathan, 1, 90, 117, 118, 119, 123, 159, 170, 217, 220, 221, 222, 227, 228, 239, 299 319, 324, 325, 336, 337, 341-343, 345, 352, 369, 371, 372, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 380, 382-4, 386, 387, 388, 397, 398, 399, 402, 407, 409, 431
Trumbull Joseph, 19, 22, 24
Trumbull, Rev. Mr., 300
Tryon, raid on Danbury, 93; burns E. Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk, 251; property destroyed, 255; burns Continental Village 122; Phillips Manor, 127
Tupper, Gen. Benj., 526
Tyler, Col. John, 28

Upham, Col., Br. Com. of Prisoners, 400, 403

Valley Forge, winter of 1777-8, 160
Van Cortlandt Manor House, 368
Varnum, Judge James M., arrives at Marietta, 521; delivers Fourth July address, 523; assists in making code of laws, 524-5; death, Jan. 10, 1789, 544
Vaughn's, Gen., expedition up the Hudson to relieve Burgoyne, 121, 122
Verplancks Point, 116, 123, 247, 249, 269
Vigo, Francis, Indian trader, 532
Virginia accounts, 487-8
Virginia House of Burgesses, resolution of, 19

Wadsworth, Col. Jeremiah, 161, 175, 321, 322, 471, 486
Waite, Lieut. Daniel, 89
Wales, Nathaniel, 19
Walker, Capt. Joseph, 339; Parsons recommends him to Gen. Gates, 411; 281, 352
Walter, Rev. Dr. Wm.; notable letter from Parsons, 179-184; 192, 285, 314, 354, 462-3
Ward, Gen. Artemas, 33, 34, 37
Washington, George; elected general, June 15, 1775; assumes command July 2; reports situation of the army, 33; fortifies Dorchester Heights, 38; Boston evacuated, the army ordered to N. Y., 39; fortifies N. Y. and Brooklyn Heights, 41; battle of Long Island, retreat to N. Y., and to White Plains, 50-73; campaign of 1777 in New Jersey, 100-112; July, 1778, entire army at White Plains, 189; his method of espionage, 275-280; Arnold's treason, 304-14; meets Rochambeau, 304; the N. Y. and Yorktown compaigns, 364-93; his scheme of slack water navigation for the Potomac, 520; election and inauguration as President, 513; writes to Lafayette of Parsons and others proposing to settle in Ohio, 546
Washington County organized and County Court opened, 526
Waterbury, Gen. David, 1, 366, 390, 403, 405, 406

Wayne, Gen. Anthony; captures Stony Point, 259
Webb, Col. Chas., 2, 26, 106
Webb, Col. Samuel B., 105, 108, 109, 110, 124, 134, 136, 138, 178, 179, 281, 318, 338 360
West Point, 106; Parsons in command, 142; description of, 161-2; social life at, 165; 246, 318
Whale boats concealed in inlets on the Sound from Rye to Norwalk, 110
White, Maj. Haffield, 515
Whitefield, Rev. Geo.; buried beneath Rev. Jonathan Parsons' pulpit, 11
White Plains, great encampment at in 1778, 189
Williard, Prest. Harvard Coll.; Parsons send him account of his discoveries in the West, 489-495
Williams, Rev. Elisha, 8
Williams, Wm., 18, 19
Wilson, Wm., Indian trader, 571
Wilton, 216, 253, 254
Windham, Co. Conn., its original financial scheme, 468
Wolcott, Gen. Erastus, 10, 23
Wolcott, Henry, 9
Wolcott, Gen. Oliver, 10, 565-6
Wolcott, Roger, 10
Wolcott, Ursula, 10
Woodward, Hon. J. G., 459
Wooster, Gen. David, 1, 4, 33, 77, 82; killed, 93
Wyllys, Col. Samuel, 24, 26, 37, 48, 106, 318
Wyllys, Major, 352
Wyoming District in Pa. claimed by Conn., 18, 19, 326

Yale College, 6; May, 1781, confers honorary degrees on Washington and Parsons, 360

JUN 30 1947